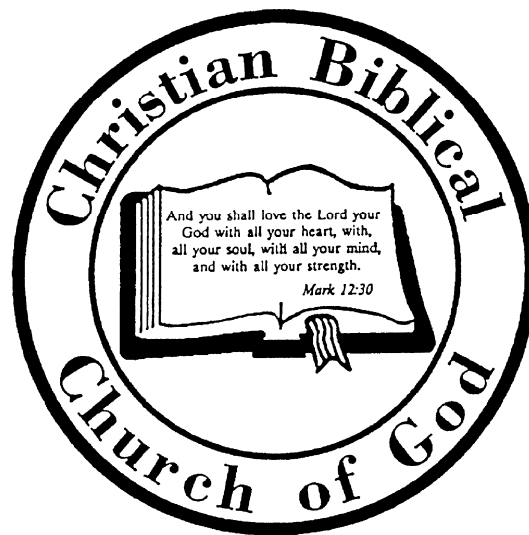


# Epistle of James



## Transcript Book

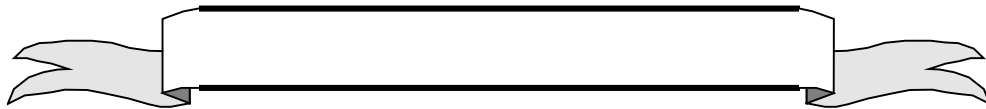
By Fred R. Coulter

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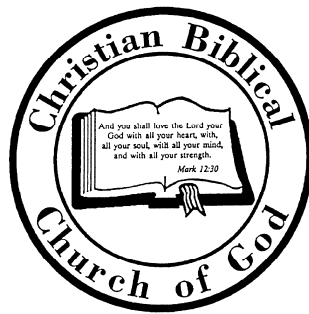
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## Epistle of James

Series of 13 sermons by Fred R. Coulter



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## **Compact Disc**

*[When included]*

**Tracks 1 & 2 Epistle of James I**

**Tracks 3 & 4 Epistle of James II**

**Tracks 5 & 6 Epistle of James III**

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**Tracks 9 & 10 Epistle of James V**

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## Foreword

This transcript book covers 13 sermons by Fred R. Coulter, a minister of Jesus Christ for over 50 years, on the biblical writings of the Apostle James. You will come to understand the teachings of the Apostle James through reading and meditating on what this series of sermons teaches.

The first transcript, *Epistle of James I – Have God's Faith*, shows that the book of James was written primarily to Jews of religion and nationality who became Christians. It also seems that this book was delivered to all the tribes of Israel. In the study of this transcript you will come to realize that the Faith of God is a gift from God to an individual. It is something to be sought after, to pray for, and to value immensely. One can have a measure of their own faith and belief, but that is not faith unto salvation.

The second sermon transcript, *Epistle of James II – Endure and Receive Your Crown*, shows that the book of James contains things that the Apostle Paul addressed in his epistles. James, in his writings, shows that doubt, being double-minded, is not acceptable to God. James then shows that you get rid of doubt by proving a matter one way or another. A Christian, if they are going to remain a Christian, must be single-minded in their pursuit of a relationship with God.

The third transcript, *Epistle of James III – Making Judgments*, shows that in a relationship with God one is to personally do what God wants done. In a life lived by a Christian there exists a personal calling from God followed by a personal daily relationship with God full of personal prayer to God and answers to such prayers from God. In such a Christian life it must be remembered that mercy triumphs over judgment. God alone knows the heart of a person, and it is Him alone that has the right to condemn a person. A Christian is not to allow condemning attitudes to enter their lives.

The fourth transcript, *Epistle of James IV – Profession of Faith without Works is Dead*, teaches that a person is to love their neighbor as themselves and to take care of their lives in doing what needs to be done in service to God. Especially, it is noted that if one has respect of persons that they are practicing sin.

The fifth transcript, *Epistle of James V – What it Means to have Works of Faith*, shows that the Apostle James wrote of a faith that will motivate works of faith and the Apostle Paul wrote of a faith that motivates you to obey God. This transcript shows in detail that they both taught the same thing.

The sixth sermon of the transcript series, *Epistle of James VI – Horses and Boats – Chapter 3*, focuses on what does one say about others and to others. Examples are used of how a small rudder will direct a much larger sized boat and of a small bridle guiding a horse to show how the tongue effects one's life. It not only affects one's direction in life but it can also affect the lives of others.

The seventh transcript, *Epistles of James VII – The Power of the Tongue*, is a continuation of how words can bring about peace and goodwill or they can bring about war and hatred. Additionally, it shows that the Epistle of James very much reflects the teaching and thinking of the Apostle Matthew.

The eighth transcript, *Epistle of James VIII – Friend of the World/Enemy of God*, covers the fourth chapter of the book of James in detail. If a person professes that they are a follower of Christ, then they must be doers of the commands of Christ—in other words they must have works of faith. If they have no works, then they are not of God but they serve Satan.

The ninth transcript, *Epistle of James IX – Ten Commandments to Overcome Worldliness #1*, along with the tenth transcript *Epistle of James X – Ten Commandments to Overcome Worldliness #2*, teach in detail what to remove from one's life. An important part of avoiding the attitudes of the world is for God's people to not compare themselves among themselves. This one thing leads to strife and unrighteous judgement among the people of God.

The eleventh transcript, *Epistle of James XI – Judging God and Judging the Law*, gives instruction as to not sin against God by judging God. Revealed is the seriousness of speaking against the Law and that it is one of the greatest sins in the world that the world is doing to God.

The twelfth transcript, *Epistle of James XII – Stir Up Treasure in Heaven*, shows how foolish it is to not include God in the planning of your physical life. Also, the wrong kind of merchandising, is shown to come from the mind of Satan. Revealed is that God allows a lot of different things that one can do in life, and all are in the realm of the Will of God. James reminds the reader that in reality this life is just, at best, temporary. All the so-called riches of the world are like a mirage in the desert. The riches come and go with the heat and they vanish and are no longer to be found by one.

The last transcript of this book of sermon transcripts, *Epistle of James XIII – Endure & Look to the God of Comfort*, teaches that a Christian is to include God in everything that one does. And a Christian will face shortcomings, will run into troubles as people without God run into different troubles, but a Christian is to put everything in God's hands. They are to endure until God delivers them and they are not to be forgetful in thanks for being delivered.

Special thanks goes to Bonnie Orswell, Nancy Spaller, and Laila Patterson for transcribing these messages.



# Epistle of James I Have God's Faith

Fred R. Coulter

As we understand it, James was the brother of Jesus; I see no reason to say that he was not the brother of Jesus. We also have to understand that with the book of James we're dealing with something that is very unusual. You don't get this in the *King James* because of the way it's translated. So in my translation—*The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*—I try and bring it out in a much more personal way and much more understandable way, not that the *King James* is not good; it's all right, but we're dealing with ancient language.

Just to give you an example, let's show you to whom the book of James was written. Does this not make a big difference to who it's being written to? *Yes, it does!* James was highly esteemed by all of the Jews, not just Christian Jews, but *all* of the Jews. As you will read in the background, he was ignominiously martyred; I believe it was in 62<sub>A.D.</sub>

The book of James was written to Jewish Christians; Jews of religion and nationality who became Christians. So, this epistle was written between, I would say, approximately 45<sub>A.D.</sub> up to about 52<sub>A.D.</sub> We have no exact timeframe. We don't have any timeframe, because it does not address the problem that the Church had called *the circumcision problem*. However, that does not necessarily mean that this was written before 52<sub>A.D.</sub> It's just an indication that is was, but if you're just dealing with the synagogue you're not going to be dealing with a non-circumcision problem in the first place.

Let's go to James 5 and we will see something also very interesting concerning what he says later on:

James 5:14: "Is anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church..." In this case the word is 'ecclesia'—the name for *church*—which means those who are *the called out ones*.

So, what we really are finding revealed in this: that this was sent to the Jews—also an indication to all the 12 tribes in addition to just the Jews—within the synagogue, because he says that if someone 'comes into your synagogue.' Then he says 'if any is sick, call the elders of the Church.'

What do we have? *We have within the synagogue, what we knew all the time:* Those

Jews, who believed in Christ and followed Christ, were a Church within the synagogue. That's interesting, not many people know that. I didn't fully comprehend it until I was translating it. Then I understood it.

Now, let's do just a little bit of Scriptural background before we get into the first part of the book of James, because it talks about faith, trials, and how we are going to *exercise the faith*.

We will actually see that the seven general epistles follow this exact outline as Paul gave here. I also need to mention, that these seven general epistles should, in the proper canonization of the Bible, come immediately after the book of Acts. You have Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Acts, and then you should have James; 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>-Peter, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>-John, and then Jude, then Romans. The reason that that should be is because once you read them *you know that you are to keep the commandments of God*, without a doubt!

Whereas, if you read Paul first, especially if you read Gal. 3, where Paul said that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. Most Protestants think that Christ has redeemed us so we don't have to keep the law, because the law is a curse. The Law is not a curse; ***breaking the Law is a curse!*** That's why these should be there first.

How many even in the Church of God really get through and study the seven general epistles? I know when I was getting ready for it, Ed asked me the question: 'Well, I don't ever remember really studying those in all the years that I've been in the Church.' *True!* And the one we study the most of is 1-John. Why? *Because it has a lot to do with love!* We all want love—isn't that true? So that's why we study 1-John. But, we have to have all of it.

Notice what the Apostle Paul says here, in the love chapter, 1-Corinthians 13:13: "And now, these three remain: faith, hope *and* love..." That's the exact sequence of how these epistles are put together:

- faith is James
- hope is Peter
- love is John
- Jude is a special warning at the end

So, we have *faith, hope and love*. What we need to really understand is that ***true faith is***

**based upon love!** And as a matter of fact, the whole Bible, when you really understand it and put it together, is based upon love. What did Jesus Christ say of the whole Bible?

Matt. 22—one of the things that this false prophet there was writing about was the thing that got to him was how could Jesus be a man of love and healing and still be intolerant and angry? *Because he doesn't know God*; it's very simple! When they were debating about which was the great law and the commandment:

Matthew 22:37: "And Jesus said to him, 'You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'" Notice the all out commitment that is there—*all of it!*

Christians are not narrow-minded. Have you ever been accused of being narrow-minded? '*Oh, you're narrow-minded.*' Again, which way leads to death? *The broad way!* Christians are what kind of minded? *Single-minded!* Distinct difference between being narrow-minded and single-minded, because narrow-minded means that *you're not going to give any countenance to anybody for anything whether they even repent or not!* Single-mindedness is you're not going to give countenance to sin, but *where there's repentance, there's mercy, grace and forgiveness!* A vast difference!

This is how we're to love God, v 38: "This is *the* first and greatest commandment; and *the* second *one* is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (vs 38-40).

***Everything that God has ever spoken, and centered on is based upon love!*** Not only for the people that He's created in His creation, but also showing love that *God's way is right*. That's why Adam and Eve were cut off from the Tree of Life, after they took of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

We know the end result of what happened with the sin of Adam and Eve and what the world has come to. Would you want to live all eternity in this kind of environment, that we are living in now, with all the mayhem, sin and death? *No!* Eternity can only be experienced ***when there is love and total commitment and obedience to God!*** That's why He said, 'I'm going to put them out of the Garden of Eden and I'm going to put the cherubim to guard the way, lest they eat of the Tree of Life *and live forever*,' in their sinful condition. *Sinful condition* was not there; I added that.

Look at what the world has been because

of Satan. Part of God's whole plan is also to stop the eternal wickedness of Satan. So, when you read in there that God destroyed these people because of this, or God destroyed these people because of that, or corrected them because of sin, *it was done in love, judgment and righteousness*, but based on love and we know from the Holy Days that there is going to be the second resurrection for all those that have not been called; so they will have an opportunity.

- What are you going to do with this little baby that was beaten to death the instant it was born?
- How is God going to undo that?
- *God is going to have to!*
- *God has a way to do it!*

You might study the whole Bible from that point of view. The whole Bible is based on love. Can you have faith in God without loving God with all your heart, mind, soul, being? *Not truly!* I mean, you can believe something, but like this book I just showed you: *The Lies We Believe*. It's absolutely amazing! This is a very good book. He also talks about 'religious' lies that people believe. Not all of them. He doesn't have all the Truth, but it's helpful. I find it's a very good book.

Let's look at some other things concerning faith, and this becomes very profound and interesting

Luke 18:8: "I tell you that He will execute vengeance for them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, shall He find **the true faith on the earth?**" Compare that with 2-Thess. 2.

We are seeing this happen right now, inasmuch as the operation of it. I don't want anyone to say that we're seeing the *man of sin, the son of perdition* right now. That's not what we're seeing. But the *mystery of iniquity* does already work. We saw this happen in one of the larger Churches of God. They are leaving the Truth and blinding themselves! The more that they are blinding themselves, the more new things that they say that they are understanding and uncovering. What they're doing is they're *walking in darkness* if that's in you as Jesus said.

- What kind of light is in you?
- Is the light that is in you
- Is it darkness

**or**

- Is it light?

Here's what happens; it's speaking of the 'wicked one'; 2-Thessalonians 2:8: "And then the lawless one will be revealed (whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth, and will

destroy with the brightness of His coming)." That ties in with *casting the beast and the false prophet* into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19).

Verse 9: "Even the one whose coming is according to *the* inner working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders... [the lies we believe; getting set up for it] ...and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are perishing because they did not receive the love of the Truth, so that they might be saved" (vs 9-10). Compare that; Jesus asked that when He comes to the earth: Will He find faith? *It's going to be hard to find!* Why? *Because the whole world is deceived!*]

What happens? Verse 11: And for this cause God will send upon them a powerful deception that will cause them to believe *the* lie"—that that man is God. Interesting title, *The Lies We Believe*.

What kind of faith is it that we really have? This is something that is so important to understand.

Mark 9—this is when there was a casting out of a demon, which could not be cast out because the disciples didn't believe, and neither did the father believe, so it was some difficulties here.

Mark 9:21: And He asked his father, 'How long a time has this *demon* been with him?' And he said, 'From childhood. For it often throws him both into the fire and into the water, that it might destroy him. But if You have the power *to do* anything, have compassion on us *and* help us.' And Jesus said to him, '**If you can believe, all things are possible to the one who believes.**'" (vs 21-23).

The word *believe* is the verb *to be believing*, the verb of *faith*. In the Greek *faith* is 'pistos'; *to believe* is 'pisteuo.' Even in the English you have faith, which is to believe something. The noun is *faith*, but the verb is *believe*.

Verse 24: "And the father of the little child cried out at once, saying with tears, '**Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief.**'"

That's where we nearly always are in the case of human beings. We have to *grow in grace and knowledge, faith, love and hope* and all these sorts of things. Here is something we need to understand about faith. A lot of people say, 'Well, if I could just work up the faith.' You're not going to *work up* faith. ***Faith has to come from God!***

Revelation 14:12 "Here is *the* patience of the saints..." We're going to see that in James the word should be *endurance* more than *patience*,

because patience is a *quality of mind*. And as we will see it talks about in the *King James*, the patience of Job. You read Job; he was anything but *patient*, but he did *endure*.

Verse 12: "Here is the [endurance] patience of the saints; here *are* the ones who keep the commandments of God **and** the faith of Jesus."

That means Jesus' *very own faith*, that's what that means. If you "...keep the commandments **of God and** the faith **of** Jesus" He has to impart it. Faith is a gift; faith is something to pray for, not something you can work up. You can have a measure of your own faith and belief, but that's not faith unto salvation.

Mark 11:22: "And Jesus answered said to them, 'Have faith *from* God.'" He is saying, *have God's faith*, the faith of God. Why? *Because they looked at the miracle*, which was He cursed the fig tree on the way into the temple.

Verse 20: "And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from *the* roots. Then Peter remembered *and* said to Him, 'Look, Master! The fig tree that You cursed has dried up.' And Jesus answered and said to them, '**Have faith from God.**'" (vs 20-22). That's what he's saying; *that's the whole purpose of the book of James, to have God's faith!* Your faith is not going to do it, because *your faith* may believe a lie. ***God's faith won't believe a lie!***

He says, following up on that, v 23: "For truly I say to you, whoever shall say to this mountain, "Be taken away and be cast into the sea," and shall not doubt in his heart..."—provided it is the will of God as we tie that in with other Scriptures. God is not going to let it be used as a charlatan display for people running around in the name of God, casting trees into the ocean.

"...but shall believe that what he said will take place, he shall have whatever he shall say. For this reason I say to you, **all the** things that you ask *when* you are praying, **believe** that you will receive *them*, **and they shall be given to you**" (vs 23-24). It doesn't tell us when, and it doesn't tell us in what manner

Concerning prayer, v 25: "But when you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive, so that your Father Who *is* in heaven may forgive you your offenses. For if you do not forgive, neither will your Father Who *is* in heaven forgive you your offenses." (vs 25-26). So there's a little key in *faith and prayer*. Here's how our faith is to be:

1. it is to *come from God*
2. it is to be *living, active*.

You have to draw close to God by loving Him with all your heart, mind, soul and being. Therefore, then you can have faith.

Now, if you get to the place that you haven't been doing it like we all know we need to and you are like the man who said, 'help my unbelief'; then even God will do that.

1-Corinthians 2:1: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with superiority of speech or wisdom... [the wisdom of men] ...in proclaiming the testimony of God to you. For I decided not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was in weakness and in fear and in much trembling *when* I was with you; and my message and my preaching *was* not in persuasive words of human wisdom; rather, *it was* in demonstration of *the* Spirit and of power; so that your faith might not be in *the* wisdom of men, but in *the* power of God" (vs 1-5). That's where faith needs to be. It needs to be *God's faith* and it needs to come *from God*. It is a gift, which He gives!

There are many important things that we can learn here with this. Many important things and we'll tie in some other Scriptures as we go along.

James 1:1: "James, a servant of God and of *the* Lord Jesus Christ..." What does it truly mean to be a servant? The Greek word there is 'doulos'—which means *a slave*. That means that you are bought and paid for by Jesus Christ, as a purchased, bought slave. What is a slave going to do? *Follow the will of his master and work for him!* This can also be translated *a bond-slave*.

We can also tie in the Scripture that we are 'bought with a price.' We are not our own (1-Cor. 6:19-20 [transcriber's correction].

James is not coming on here, saying 'Look, I am the great, lofty relative of Jesus.' He's not doing that. As a matter of fact, we find that James did not even believe Jesus until after He appeared to him, after His resurrection.

James 1:1: "...to the twelve tribes..." So, he was not just writing this to the synagogues alone where the Jews were, but to the twelve tribes where all the twelve tribes of Israel were. Did they know where the other ten tribes were?

The Jews today—I read it, I couldn't believe it; I'm reading some things in the Mishnah and the Talmud, so I know what I'm talking about with the Jews—say that the ten tribes are lost because they were absorbed, that is intermarried into the rest of the pagan population.

But, *Josephus* records in his day, that there were millions of those who were the descendants of the ten tribes, which is far more than the number of Jews, by the way. There were millions of them during his day that lived in the area of what we call Parthia or the Caucasus, from which we get the white race that is called Caucasian, who then are the ones who have received the blessings of Abraham (Gen. 48 & 49). This is a very broad thing!

"...which *are* in the dispersion..."—Diaspora, the Greek word that also means *to be planting as a seed*—to disperse seed. Now what did Jesus say of all the tribes of Israel? *He would sift them through the gentiles and not loose one seed!* It's a very interesting word. So, he says:

"...Greetings!" (v 1). Next comes the hardest, most difficult thing for anyone to do. So he's not starting out here with an easy lovey-dovey way—is he?

Verse 2: "Consider *it*... [or *count it*] ...all joy my brethren, when you are beset by various trials." The *King James* translates it, 'when you fall into...' And the Greek means *when it happens to you*. Now that's a little difficult, and it doesn't mean that you are to count it all joy while you are going through it. But the end result of it is going to bring the joy if you do the will of God.

Now let's look at a couple of other Scriptures to go along with this. Let's look at Jesus' example; we will see the kind of joy that Jesus had, which becomes a very important example for us. In many ways, His life was really most miserable by human standards. He had no friend. He did love John; He loved His mother and Joseph; He loved everybody. But, how many loved Him in return? *None of them!* He was truly a lonely man.

When we have all kinds of trials flying against us, we have the Word of God. I don't know any place, brethren, where you can come to have any understanding of your trials and difficulties, except the Word of God. There's no other writing, there's no other book, there's no other way that will do it this way. We're not dealing with some counselor whose holding your hand and telling you good and nice and lofty things, because when you are in the midst of a deep trial those things are really very shallow.

Hebrews 12:1: "Therefore, *since* we are surrounded by such a great throng of witnesses... [all the examples in the Bible of the faithful ones] ...let us lay aside every weight..."

*You've got to be willing to give up everything for God!* That means in whatever trial

you are going through, you set aside any of your own thoughts. Don't judge it based on your own thoughts, because you may be like this book, *The Lies We Believe*, and you're not perceiving it the way that it should be. That's why the Bible becomes so very important.

"...and the sin that so easily entraps *us*; and let us run the race set before us with endurance, having *our minds* fixed on Jesus, the Beginner and Finisher of *our* faith; Who for the joy..." (vs 1-2). When was there that joy? *Before and after the crucifixion!* That's when it was. Was it joyful going through the things that Jesus went through?

- To be scourged?
- To be spit upon?
- To be beaten?
- To be pummeled?
- To be crucified?
- To have the spear shoved into His side and He died
- To spill out every drop of blood that He had?

**NO!** He prayed, 'Oh, my Father, if it be possible, take this cup from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but your will be done.'

"...Who for the joy that lay ahead of Him endured *the* cross, *although* He despised *the* shame, and has sat down at *the* right hand of the throne of God. Now meditate deeply on Him... [you look to Him] ...Who endured such great hostility of sinners against Himself..." (vs 2-3)—and He did! All of our problems come that way, too.

Sometimes we run up against things that are just absolutely incredible to hold onto. But, it's the old saying: you think you've got it bad, because you lost a foot, and then you find someone who has lost both legs. And he thought he had it bad until he found a man who lost both legs and one arm. And he thought he had it bad until he found a man who lost both legs and both arms. And he thought he had it bad until he found a man who lost both legs and both arms and lost his hearing. And he thought it was bad until he found a man who lost both legs, both arms, his hearing and his sight.

If you think life is tough for you, go back and see the movie, which was excellently well done, on Helen Keller. She didn't ask for it. She didn't want it, but she was born deaf and she was born blind. So, we can look at that as a human example. And you know who she credits coming through all that? *God and the love of the one who finally said 'I'm going to teach her.'* **Look to Christ, consider Him.**

"...so that you do not become weary and faint in your minds... [*and give up!*] ...You have not yet resisted to the point of *losing* blood in your struggle against sin" (vs 3-4)—or enduring any problem, that you're going through. It says that God is going to chasten you, God is going to correct you, that's all part of the trials that we go through.

Verse 5: "And you have already forgotten the admonition that He addresses to you as to sons: 'My son, do not despise *the* chastening of *the* Lord, nor grow weary of being reproved by Him.'" Lots of times God doesn't even have to chasten you or rebuke you. You run up against the problems of your own life, which are the result of sin!

"For whom *the* Lord loves He chastens, and He severely disciplines every son whom He receives.' If you endure chastening, God is dealing with you as *a Father* with *His* sons. For who is the son whom *the* Father does not chasten? But if you are without chastisement, of which all are partakers, then you are bastards and not sons. Furthermore, we have had our fleshly fathers who chastened *us*, and we respected *them*; should we not all the more *willingly* be subject to the Father of spirits, and live *forever*? For in the first case, they chastened *us* for a few days in whatever way seemed good to them; but in the second case, He *chastens us* for *our own* benefit that we may be partakers of His Holiness" (vs 6-10). **Looking toward eternal life**; that is fantastic and tremendous, brethren.

Verse 11: "Now truly, no chastisement... [or trial] ...for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous..." That's the thing concerning trials and chastening. When you are going through it, it is not joyous. Yet, James says, 'count it all joy' when you become involved in various trials. So, on the surface it seems like there is a contradiction, but there isn't, because the way that that is phrased by James is a looking back on it, rather than while you're being involved in it.

It is clarified here, v 11: "...nevertheless, **afterwards**..." I've gone through trials that I had thought would never end, but they do. Some are kind of continuous, they on go and they have little highs and lows all along with various degrees of intensity, but we can learn from them.

"...nevertheless, afterwards it yields *the* peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who have been exercised by it.... [*and part of faith is this*] ...Therefore, lift up the hands that are hanging down, and *revive* the weakened knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which *is* lame be turned aside; but let it rather be healed. Pursue peace with everyone, and Holiness, without which no one will see the Lord; looking diligently, lest anyone fall

from the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and through this many be defiled" (vs 11-15).

This book *The Lies We Believe*, shows how that many people end up in bitterness, because when they're going through trials and problems they focus in on that, and they try and a keep score, who's right/who's wrong. You can't do that. You have to turn to Christ and let Him do all of the scoring. ***The first thing is repentance and forgiveness and getting your life cleaned up!*** Don't try and count the score.

James 1:3: "Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance." As I mentioned, patience is a *frame of mind*. Endurance is a *going through* the frame of mind, *going through* the difficulties— *enduring*. It's producing endurance. Remember what we read there concerning that 'he who endures to the end, the same shall be saved' (Matt. 24:13)—same root word *enduring*.

Verse 4: "But let endurance have *its perfect* work..."—*completeness*. Since most trials are not perfect—but miserable and a result of mistakes and trauma—it's kind of difficult to say:

"...let endurance have *its perfect* work so that you may be perfect and complete, **not lacking in anything**" (v 4). That's really something to keep hold of.

That doesn't mean that God is going to give you everything. That doesn't mean God is going to give you the world. But, that means that *you're not lacking in anything spiritually in relationship to faith, because you believe*. And if you do, then it doesn't matter what happens, in the final analysis. Going through it makes a big difference in the short term.

(go to the next track)

Let's see something interesting here with this and see how James 1:2 & 4 tie in with the beatitudes in Matt. 5. We are dealing with, vs 1-4, the attitude toward problems, toward trials. We're dealing with the reason that it is there, because it's *to test our faith* and *to give us endurance*. And we know the outcome: that we become complete and whole *spiritually*, lacking in nothing.

As we go along through the whole book of James, I think you'll be surprised how many of these things tie back into the beatitudes:

Matthew 5:10: "Blessed *are* those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness..."—otherwise, you feel picked on. I've gone through that, too. We will see that Peter says, 'Count it all joy when you have fiery trials come upon you,' but don't anyone complain if

you are being corrected for your own faults and mistakes. We can fill in the blanks with that.

It's like when I got a ticket recently speeding, coming up here. It wasn't God's fault; it was mine. I didn't count that joyous because I had to pay \$142; they raised the price! But, I was happy, from the point of view that I wasn't in a wreck, there wasn't any problem that way. That was not for righteousness sake that I got the ticket. There was no blessing in it. It was a penalty. So, we need to make sure that we understand the difference in it.

- if you are persecuted because you love God
- if you're persecuted because you believe
- God
- if you're persecuted because you keep the commandments of God

*count that joy and a blessing!*

Verse 10: "...for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when they shall reproach you, and shall persecute you, and shall falsely..." (vs 10-11). Did they not do that to Jesus? *Yes, they did!* That's why it's important that He said it, because He lived it and experienced it in perfection. Can we then believe the words of Jesus Christ? *Absolutely!*

"...say every wicked thing against you, for My sake. Rejoice and be filled with joy, for great is your reward in heaven; for in this same manner they persecuted the prophets who *were* before you" (vs 10-12).

Verse 48 talks about *perfection*. This is the ultimate character perfection that trials are going to bring, which *when we endure through faith*, we will achieve and finally at the resurrection.

Verse 48: "Therefore, you shall be perfect..." How are you perfect?

- through the power of God
- through the grace of God
- through the trials you go through

Verse 48: "Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect." That is the ultimate goal that we are shooting toward with faith and hope and love.

Let's talk about a little bit of endurance; Matthew 24:13: "But the one who endures to *the* end, that one shall be saved"—showing *endurance*.

Matthew 10:22: "And you shall be hated by all for My name's sake; but the one who endures to

*the end, that one shall be saved.*" his shows how long the endurance must be, to the end, either of your life or the return of Christ, whichever timeframe you happen to be living in the time that calls you in your life.

Romans 5:1: "Therefore having been justified by faith..." What does that mean?

- that you absolutely, truly believe God
- that Jesus Christ was that sacrifice given for the forgiveness of your sins
- that upon repentance God puts you in right standing, justified before Him, through Christ *by your faith*

That's why prophecy will never save anyone.

"...we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access *by faith* into this grace in which we stand..." (vs 1-2). That is really something that God would do that.

- talk about *God's love*
- talk about *God's mercy*
- talk about *God's patience*
- talk about *God's endurance*

Put yourself in God's place for a minute and just view this whole world. Does it not take love, forbearance, patience and endurance to go through and complete your plan—*You* being God, from that perspective—in the time that God would have it done? How many of us would just intervene and we would kill the whole thing right now? *Yes, it takes that patience, takes that love, by faith!*

So, we stand in that grace "...and we ourselves boast in the hope of the glory of God" (v 2).

That's something—isn't it? *We rejoice in that hope*, that God says, 'Look, you're not going to be a human being forever. If you endure to the end, you have faith till the end, I will resurrect you and give you a spirit body of glory and of power.' *That's the hope! That is the hope, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God!* That's what's so important. God is interested in saving the individual that he calls.

Verse 3: "And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations... [trials, tests and temptations that come along] ...realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance."

As a matter of fact, you might look that up in your *Interlinear* and I think its translated *endurance* there, too; it's the exact same Greek word. Isn't that what we need? *We need*

*endurance! Absolutely!*

Verse 4: "And endurance *brings forth* character [experience]..." What does experience do? *That means you can help someone else, because, you have experienced it!* Isn't that true? Can you not help people more when you've experienced something? You can say, 'Yes, I've gone through something like that, I have experienced that! Therefore, I know that this is God's way to do it.'

However, that doesn't mean that in order to be able to help someone who has problems and sins, that you must necessarily do the same thing in order to understand it. People say, 'We'll help the drug addicts by sending out an addict.' That's a whole wrong premise. Maybe by testimony of a converted addict to another addict, he can help, that may be true; he's had the experience. But, what really needs to be beyond the experience is to have the situation where that you understand there are choices. It's the choices that are important. Concerning testing and trying, God does not tempt anyone with evil. He gives us choices, not evil.

"...and character [experience] *brings forth* hope. And the hope of God never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us" (vs 4-5). That makes the complete picture; That's what becomes exciting.

I know in my own life, and I know in your own life, what is the one thing that we fail to do? I'll confess my weakness in it. *We fail to pray when we are in trouble*, for whatever reason. Because:

- 1) You're ashamed to admit that you sinned. But, you know you did.
  - 2) You think that God is looking down on you; so therefore, you don't go to Him to pray, because you don't know whether God is going to hear you or not.
- If God knows everything and every hair on your head, does He already know that you've done that?
  - Whatever it may be, does He already know you're in some kind of trial?
  - *Yes, He does!*

So, what we need to do is get more in the practice and habit of praying *when* we find ourselves in different trials and problems and difficulties, because God is there. If you have the faith of Jesus Christ and God, then there will be a solution to the problem. How that solution comes about will be determined by how God is going to work it out.

If there's more than one person involved, if it's just a personal problem, that's between you and God. If it involves someone else, it's between you and God and between the other person and God and between you and the other person. So, that becomes somewhat more complicated, because there are times when one person is willing and the other is not. you can't do anything about that other person who is not willing if there're not willing to choose God's way. that compounds the problem. But nevertheless that should give you steadfastness in looking toward the love of God, in being able to solve your problem and endure and gain the experience from it.

Let's come back to the book of James. I'm going to go ahead and we'll cover the next section. I'll read it all the way through. Then we'll go back to the verses, and we'll go through each one analytically.

James 1:5: "However, if anyone lacks wisdom..." I tell you, that's the thing we lack more of in any trial—isn't it. What is the thing that you say, that I say, that everyone says when they go through a problem and don't handle it correctly? You say that was *a stupid thing to do*. Politicians say 'I did not exercise good judgment there.'

"...However, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, Who gives to everyone freely.... That is a present tense verb; He *is giving* to everyone *freely*; no charge, no cost!

"...and does not reproach *the one who asks*; and it shall be given to him. But let him ask in faith, not doubting at all because the one who doubts is like a wave of *the sea* that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*. Do not let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord. *He is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." (vs 5-8). Now those four verses there really tell us an awful lot, they really do!

Let's go back and look at each one of them there; v 5: "However, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God..." One of the biggest problems we have in trying to solve our own problems, is to do it our own way, *rather than asking wisdom from God to do it God's way!*

What happens when we use our own wisdom? *We do stupid things!* Sure we do! So, you ask God. Does God want to give you wisdom? Does God want to provide for you? *Certainly, He does!*

Let's look at the beatitudes again. He will give to us. God is not necessarily going to give us

the things that *we want* and the way that we want them or how that we want them, because God is not a *catalogue*. God is not an *order-filler*. God is not *QVC*. God does not react like an *ATM socialist*. Do you know what an *ATM socialist* is? *One who treats life like an automatic bank teller!* You walk up and stick your card in. No questions asked, you get exactly what you punch in there and you get it. No responsibility and you walk away. And furthermore, you hope that it doesn't charge your account.

The socialist attitude: *this is the way it ought to be for everyone*. But, that's not life. I call them the ATM socialists. They want everything now. They want it now and they want it to be fair and they want it to be given to everyone instantly. God is not that way, He says:

Matthew 7:7: "**Ask**, and it shall be given to you. **Seek**, and you shall find. **Knock**, and it shall be opened to you." This shows that there is some work and effort involved. That it's not going to be 'give me this Lord, give me that Lord, give me the other thing Lord.' He may give you something, but not what you're asking for. You may ask God for wisdom. Immediately a trial comes upon you and you say, 'God, why did I have this trial come upon me.' If He would talk to you He would say 'Well, you asked for wisdom, so I gave you a trial, so that you could learn to have wisdom in this trial.' Isn't that what we're talking about here? *Yes!*

Verse 7: "**Ask**, and it shall be given to you. **Seek**... [if it doesn't come right away, it will] ...and you shall find. **Knock**, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it shall be opened" (vs 7-8). The Greek means:

- Knock—and keep on knocking
- Seek—and keep on seeking
- Knock—and keep in knocking

And it shall be given to you. That was the whole thrust of that.

James 1:6: "But let him ask in faith, not doubting at all..." Not doubting a thing; that becomes important.

Here's how we approach God. Not only that He exists, not only that He is, but *He is everything that He said that He is, and much more than what is revealed to us!*

Heb. 11 talks about faith and what faith really is. You have to be asking in faith. Faith is more than just pretending you're going to believe. There's the pretend faith, which little children have. They have faith in Santa Claus; that's all



pretended by everyone. So, it's not that kind of thing. 'Oh, Santa Claus bring me a Nintendo.' I love the ad for the movie, where they show the Santa Claus and this little guy comes up with these two glasses and he looks up at Santa Claus and he's asking him for something and Santa Claus looks at him and pushes him down the slide with his foot. To me, that is really terrific in showing the futility and stupidity of the thing called Santa Claus. But, too many people treat God like Santa Claus. Too many people treat faith like a pretend belief, but it's more than that.

Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is *the substance...*" That's what it is. It's the actual, *spiritual substance!* Is there such a thing as spiritual substance? *Yes, there is!* Are there things that we don't see that are there? *Yes!* That's what he is saying.

"...faith is the substance of *things* hoped for, *and the conviction* of things not seen.... [Why? *Because God IS!* That's why.] ...For by this *kind of faith* the elders obtained a good report. By faith we understand that the worlds were created by *the Word of God*, so that the things that are seen were made from *things* that are invisible" (vs 1-3). Which is a tremendous modern scientific statement when we understand it. It talks about the faith of Abel and the faith of Enoch.

Verse 6: "Now, without faith..." [separate from faith] ...*it is impossible to please God.* For it is mandatory *for* the one who comes to God to believe that He exists..." That *God is*, that He *exists*. If you just believe that there is a Creator, you're not any better than the demons. They believe and they tremble because they know the judgment of God that is coming.

Jim Eason had a guy on there also from Berkeley. I thought it was interesting. But legally and philosophically he is disproving evolution and proving that there had to be a Creator. And everyone says, 'Oh my, isn't that interesting, isn't that good?' As we were listening, I made the comment that it doesn't make him any better than the demons—does it? He doesn't want to believe the Scriptures. He doesn't want to believe God, but he wants to believe there is a Creator. If you believe there is a Creator, does that not mean that He has sovereignty over your life? They don't carry the next step up. You must believe that He is, that He does exist, that everything about Him. That what He says is absolutely true and right, the kind of faith that can only come from God. You can't work it up inside.

"...For it is mandatory *for* the one who comes to God to believe that He exists, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (v

6). That's why.

James 1:6: "But let him ask in faith..." because *that faith that you have is the spiritual substance, that it is so!* Now, that's something! You can go to God and say, 'God here I am. I'm miserable and wretched and rotten, which we all are. I don't have the faith that I ought to, which you know.' We're not going to kid God—are we? Are we ever going to kid God about anything? *Of course not!* 'Help me in my unbelief. Grant me that faith, so that I'm not going to be' like it says here:

"...because the one who doubts is like a wave of *the sea...*" (v 6). You're just driven emotionally, like water, back and forth.

Go down someplace where you can watch the ocean, and watch those waves come crashing in. Surfers generally like to get out there two days before the storm arrives, because the wind has been driving those waves from the storm, which is still out in the Pacific, hasn't quite yet come. So they get out and they ride those waves in. But you watch when those waves hit the rocks; they are just tossed to and fro and crashing. That's a real good description of what it is when you don't have the faith, which is the substance, the spiritual substance, which comes from God.

"...like a wave of *the sea* that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*. Do not let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord" (vs 6-7). You are asking for yourself, you're not asking the will of God. *It has to be the will of God!*

Verse 8: "*He is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." Why is that so? *Because you are not loving God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your being*, so therefore, you are double-minded.

It's interesting in the Greek, it is 'dipsuchos,' which means *two-souled* or *two-spirited*. 'God, I've got this part of my mind for *you* and I've this other part of my mind for *me*.' For work! You cannot have faith that way. Then what happens? You have a double standard. You're unstable, on again/off again; up/down, all that sort of thing. Which is different than the trials where you're up and down, because in the trials where you are up and down, then your faith remains stable, *if you have the faith that comes from God*. That's what we need to ask for.

Now then, we get into a whole different section here when we're getting into the rest of it. Next time I'll show some different things concerning faith and concerning your attitude and concerning what happens when you are blessed

and what kind of blessing it is that comes and then it will show the result of enduring the trials which are very, very important. Then we'll get into: Does God ever tempt you with evil? It is an interesting statement there.

Verse 13: "...God is not tempted by evil..." I'll let you think on that statement, because that says an awful lot. What does it mean? God is not tempted with evil? What would be the ramifications if He were?

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

#### Scripture References:

- 1) James 5:14
- 2) 1 Corinthians 13:13
- 3) Matthew 22:37-40
- 4) Luke 18:8
- 5) 2 Thessalonians 2:8-11
- 6) Mark 9:21-24
- 7) Revelation 14:12
- 8) Mark 11:22, 20-26
- 9) 1 Corinthians 2:1-5
- 10) James 1:1-2
- 11) Hebrews 12:1-15
- 12) James 1:3-4
- 13) Matthew 5:10-12, 48
- 14) Matthew 24:13
- 15) Matthew 10:22
- 16) Romans 5:1-5
- 17) James 1:5-8, 5
- 18) Matthew 7:7-8
- 19) James 1:6
- 20) Hebrews 11:1-3, 6
- 21) James 1:6-8, 13

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- James 2:2
- Galatians 3
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- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- Genesis 48, 49

#### Also referenced: Books:

- *The Lies We Believe* by Chris Thurman
- *Josephus*

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## Epistle of James II Endure and Receive Your Crown

Fred R. Coulter

One summer my project was to translate the seven general epistles: James, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>-John and Jude.

And going through the Gospel of John, when I finished it I felt like I was ready to start. So this time in doing the translation of it and then coming back and checking everything out and organizing it, so I can bring it in a Bible study or Sabbath setting.

We're going to see that the whole the Epistle of James is really tremendous and it ties right in with everything that all the other apostles preached. There are some people who say that James—because it was written to the Jewish Christians—does not contain the things that the Apostle Paul has. We'll see that it does. And we will see that there is a lot of depth to what he wrote.

James 1:6, concerning faith: "But let him ask in faith, not doubting at all..." The way that you can really ask in faith, not doubting, is to really understand God even more. That way you can have more faith in God. Another thing, I just want to mention here concerning doubt.

- What do you do when you have a doubt?
- How should a doubt be handled? *Through prayer; that's true; that's a first step!*
- Should you just try and put it out of your mind?
- Does it get rid of the doubt to just put it out of your mind? *It comes back in, yes!*
- How do you get it out of your mind then? *Search the Scriptures!*

Many times that is true, especially as you're growing in grace and knowledge and you're walking by faith, but sometimes that faith doesn't give you very much vision down the road, so you're going to be doubting. What do you do?

- you pray about it
- you search the Scriptures
- you get that doubt and you put it right in the light of Bible Truth

That's how you get rid of doubt. You prove it one way or the other.

I remember when I was at Ambassador College and we were doing some studying on evolution, trying to prove that evolution is not true. And they have many more good books on it, by the way. That's why you have to study to show yourself

approved, rightly dividing the Word of God. Take every doubt, just like we did with evolution.

So, I was reading this thing on evolution and I was reading along where it says, then the chimpanzees, when there was a drought and there was no more food in the trees, got down on the ground and then they started walking upright. And then they started using tools, and all of this by human logic sounds very rational. At that point, I was beginning to say—because I was just new in the Church, and just new in studying and all this—and I thought, you know, that sounds kind of logical. Remember, ***all logic sounds good, but all logic is not truth!*** So, I said, 'Well, what I'm going to have to do then, to say well, boy: What if there was some evolution? Now what are you going to do?'

I kept studying! I didn't try and cast it out. I didn't try just to forget it. I didn't try to just put it in the back of my mind. I started reading everything I could about chimpanzees. I got a National Geographic that was there. You know, all libraries have National Geographics. I was reading about chimpanzees and guess what it said about a drought in Africa? *When the drought came and there was no fruit and the chimpanzees had to go on the ground, they almost died out because they couldn't function on the ground without the fruit in the trees!* Guess what? The supposition that they stood upright and made tools falls flat on its face; you don't have to worry about that any longer.

It's the same way with anything that you doubt. You get that doubt and get a good hold on it and put it right smack in the middle of the table and pour the light of Truth on it and you'll get rid of it. Therefore, it won't bother you and plague you again. But if you try and say, 'Oh, I shouldn't doubt. I got to get that out of mind. Oh, I shouldn't doubt, got to get that out of my mind.' And you just sort of run this as a broken record through your head. It will always be there, and guess what? Somewhere down the road, it's going to come back and plague you!

That's why a person who is doubting ends up being, v 8: "...a double-minded man [person]..." Why? How are we to be to God? A lot of people would accuse us of being narrow-minded, as Christians. But how are we to be to God? Not to be narrow-minded—***single-minded! With Christ we are to be single-minded!*** When we do, then:

- we will grow in faith
- we will grow in love

- we will grow in hope

Verse 9: “But let the brother who is in humble circumstances rejoice in his elevation, and *let* the one who is rich *rejoice* in his humble condition because, as *the* flower of *the* field, he himself will pass away; for the sun rises with *its* burning heat and dries up the grass, and its flower falls off, and its beautiful appearance perishes. **In the same way also shall the rich man wither in his pursuits.** Blessed *is the* man who endures trials because, after he has been proved, he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him” (vs 9-12).

An awful lot in that, and you’ll see it’s a little different than the *King James Version*, because what I’ve done is taken the tenses of the participles and the verbs that are present tense and made them present tense.

Verse 9: “But let the brother who is in [depressed] humble circumstances rejoice in his elevation.” This word depressed/humble can mean of *low degree economically, mentally, spiritually, burdened of mind as well as poor!* So depressed condition covers it all.

Take the book of James and study through what we have here, just as a personal Bible study, and list all the Scriptures that tie in with Matthew 5, 6 & 7 especially; which is called the Sermon on the Mount. We can add that to this study.

In James it talks about this person who is in a depressed condition. It can be economically, it can be spiritually, it can be by circumstances, and all of those things. And there’s a reason that James writes it this way.

Matthew 5:3<sup>[transcriber’s correction]</sup>: “Blessed *are* the **poor in spirit**... [they are not self-exalting; they are not uplifted] ...for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed *are* those who **mourn**...” (vs 3-4)—because you are going through a trial and you are in a low, depressed condition. I don’t know of any trial yet, that doesn’t leave you, while you’re going through it, depressed. Afterwards ‘it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness.’

“...for they shall be comforted” (v 4). By whom? *By God!* Maybe by someone else that God has sent, but its still by God!

Verse 5: “Blessed are the **meek**, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed *are* those **who hunger and thirst after righteousness**, for they shall be filled” (vs 5-6). This ties right in with the Sermon on the Mount.

James 1:9: “But let the brother who is in... [a depressed condition] ...humble circumstances rejoice in his elevation.” Christ has elevated him by

the calling, and you’re boasting in Christ. You’re not boasting in what you have done, because it talks about that a little bit later.

- Christ has called
- Christ has lifted the person up
- Christ has brought them to the congregation
- Christ is going to lead them and guide them

Now, let’s go to the other end of the scale, v 10: “And *let* the one who is rich...” I don’t think any of us are rich. In today’s world it’s hard to even say you’re well off, because that could be cut off in a minute. At least we are not in the humble circumstances that the (former) Soviet Union is in. I don’t think any of us could say that we’re rich, physically. ***Hopefully we are rich in Christ, and those riches in Christ are the true riches!*** Then we don’t count on the physical things that are here.

Verse 10: “And *let* the one who is rich *rejoice* in his humble condition...” Yes, that he is brought into the congregation, *the same one that the brother in a lowly condition has been called and they fellowship side-by-side!* Now, you could even translate this word humble condition as *humiliation*. I call to your attention the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, just to get an extreme difference. Here’s why:

“...because, as *the* flower of *the* field...” Whenever you look at a field there’s going to be some kind of grass out there, some kind of green, there are going to be flowers.

Matthew 6:28: “...Observe the lilies of the field... [it’s a little more poetic] ...how they grow: they do not labor, nor do they spin; but I say to you, **not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these**” (vs 28-29).

That’s really a lesson—isn’t it? That is a fantastic lesson! Whenever you get all exalted and all uplifted, go out and look at a flower. Look at its beauty, look at its intricacy, look at how fantastic it is.

I was in downtown Hollister doing something—I think it was day of Christmas Eve—and here was this man, he was out trying to make a little extra money for his Christmas thing. He was selling roses, \$4.00 a dozen, which is a pretty good price. He had two-dozen yellow roses, so I got those for Delores, because she loves yellow roses. But as we were putting them into the vase, we discovered they had all of these prickles and barbs on them, more than regular. And yellow roses smell the best of any of them, but they also give up the ghost sooner than any of the roses. That’s why you don’t

see very many commercial yellow roses. That's why they're mostly red roses, because they last longer commercially.

But you look at that rose and you look at the beauty of it and you smell the scent of it and here's this thing that is going to die, that God made so beautiful. Yet, it's got some thorns, a little prickly problem. I was doing this part of it when I bought the roses and I thought, 'Ah, that is so true!' We look good, we smell good, but when you get close to us, BAM! there's a little prickly barb that's going to get you. And I prickled my thumb, too on it.

Let's cover a little bit about what happens when the sun comes up and its burning heat happens and you don't have very much root in you as a Christian.

Matthew 13:18: "Therefore, hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the Word of the kingdom and does not understand *it*, the wicked one comes and snatches away that which was sown in his heart..." (vs 18-19)—before it took root!

Some people are like that. They're not willing to settle down long enough to let a root of God grow from its seed. Some people are that way. They hear the Word:

- oh, its good
- oh, I need faith
- oh, I need love
- oh, I need God
- oh, there's a basketball game tonight.'
- I got to go do this and I got to go do that and I got to...

—chasing from one thing to another. If you put a seed in the ground you can't constantly stir up the dirt. It's got to stay there and grow.

Jesus says: "...This is the one who was sown by the way. Now, the one who was sown upon the rocky places is the one who hears the Word and immediately... [or shortly afterwards] ... receives it with joy; but *because* he has no root in himself, *he* does not endure; for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the Word, he is quickly offended" (vs 19-21).

That's the one who has the short root and the sun came up and the heat came and it withered away. Well, that's what it's talking about here with us.

**How deep are your roots in Christ?** So, when the sun comes up and the heat comes on, which it's going to: **Are you going to have enough root?** This is why faith becomes a very important thing. ***Faith is that substance that comes from God!*** That *spiritual substance* that comes from God, from

His Spirit that is likened unto water, so that we can be, instead of the sun coming up with its burning heat and killing the flower and falling off and we're dying.

We're like Psalm 1:1: "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the Law of the LORD..." (vs 1-2).

We can go one step further. We'll see that a little bit later, about *the law of liberty* and the *Law of Christ*. Our delight is in Christ and we will see that there is the thing called the *law of faith*. And there's also the thing that is called the *law of the Spirit*.

"...and in His Law does he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water that brings forth its fruit in its season, and its leaf shall not wither... [in spite of the heat] ...and all that he does shall prosper. The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff, which the wind drives away" (vs 1-4).

Just like this windstorm we had down here last month on Hwy 5 It all dried out. There was no water there. The desert was coming back again. The wind came—whoosh! No one could see anything, but they were still driving 80mph. So, there were a hundred cars and 17 dead! It's because of that; same thing here.

Verse 5: "Therefore, the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall perish" (vs 5-6). What I want you to do is use this—not as a finite study, complete—as a building block to go ahead and study other things yourself.

James 1:12: "Blessed *is the* man who endures trials, **because after he has been proved** he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Do not let anyone who is tempted say, 'I am being tempted by God,' because God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself tempts no one *with evil*. But each one... [no corporate salvation] ...is tempted when he is **drawn away** and is enticed by his own lust.... [present tense participle, *is being drawn away*] ...And after lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is completely finished, brings forth death. Do not deceive yourselves, my beloved brethren" (vs 12-16).

Not every trial is lust; no, no! We'll get into that; we'll explain it. *God sets before us choices; He doesn't tempt us with evil!* He sets before us choices.

Verse 12: "Blessed *is the* man who endures trials..." Again, I call your attention to Matt. 5, the

beatitudes—blessed, blessed, blessed is the one.

And this ties in with v 2: “Consider *it* all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance” (vs 2-3)—*enduring trials*. Not all trials are caused by lust. No, they are not! Some trials are caused just because of mistakes. Some trials are caused just because it’s whatever it happens to be. Maybe it’s just the circumstances involved. But then you have a choice. Are you going to follow God’s way or not? That’s why it says:

Verse 12: “...because **after he has been proved...**” That’s what it means when God tempted Abraham, *He proved Abraham! He tested Abraham!* He didn’t tempt him with evil. He proved him, whether he would choose to do what God said or not.

“...he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him” (v 12).

Romans 8:28: “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.” The loving is continuous.

Jesus said, John 14:15: “If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely My commandments.” We are to keep the commandments of God because we love Him, not because He is compelling us. There’s a vast difference. When we’re children and growing up, you must be compelled, because you know no other thing, but we do it because we love God.

Now let’s go to 1-Peter 5 and let’s see what happens after we’ve endured a trial or testing. You can go back and read the account in Gen. 22, about Abraham when he was tested about offering up Isaac. And you can read in Heb. 11, the reason that he did it was because he knew that if he sacrificed Isaac—whom he received from the dead, his dead body in a figure—that God was able to raise him from the dead! Did he have any doubt in his mind about God and God’s goodness? Not one! What did God say after Abraham was proved? *God said, ‘I swear by Myself...’*—and He doesn’t have to swear—‘...that in blessing, I will bless and in multiplying I will multiply, **because you have not withheld your son, your only son from Me.**’ Great lesson in that, so be sure and please study that. Some of the trials come because the devil comes. He’s the one who tempts you with evil.

1-Peter 5:8: “Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking **anyone** he may devour. Whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren

who *are* in the world. Now, may the God of all grace... [after you make the right choice] ...Who has called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, **after you have suffered a little while, Himself perfect you, establish, strengthen, and settle you**” (vs 8-10).

That’s the whole process of trials. God will do that. God can do that, but you have to have no doubt that God is able to do that. That’s why we are to grow in grace and favor. I can tell you one thing, after something like this you know there are going to be a lot of people out there accepting false doctrine.

What is the whole lesson of the Days of Unleavened Bread? *We need to get rid of sin!* What is the theme of it? **A little leaven, leavens the whole lump!** In relationship to the Passover—as we see in *The Christian Passover* book—I can almost write the script for the heresy: ‘It really doesn’t make any difference when the Passover was in the Old Testament, 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup>, because we’re going to do it on the 14<sup>th</sup>.’

But what if your conclusion of the Old Testament is wrong or partially true? What does that do? *You can say, ‘Well, it doesn’t do anything to my faith.’ Yes, it does! It gives you a mind set to accept something that isn’t true!* And ‘a little leaven, leavens the whole lump’ and what happens later? We have seen with people in churches and organizations, what happens when they let that leaven into their minds? *They get more leaven, because it leavens the whole lump and they get more and more false doctrine!* So that’s why, when we are tested; He doesn’t test us with evil, **He tests us with a choice!**

Let’s see the ‘crown of life’; it’s fantastic, brethren, when you understand it! What crown was put on Christ during His trial that He wore on His crucifixion day? *Thorns!* Those long, three-inch barbs! What did He give up? *His crown as God to wear the crown of thorns and shame!* We could have a whole sermon on it.

James 1:12: “...he shall receive a crown of life...” That’s what God is going to give to you, a crown of life. The Bible talks about:

- a crown of life
- a crown of righteousness
- a crown of glory

Corinthians 9:24: “Don’t you know that those who run a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? That is the way you *are to* run... [we’re to run the race that’s before us] ...in order that you may obtain *the prize...*” However, everyone of us is going to receive a crown, because *we’re all going to win!*

Verse 25: “For everyone who is striving for

*mastery...* [in athletics] ...controls himself in all things....” He has to be or he is kicked out. The one who is truly going to be an athlete, truly going to strive for the masteries of it, he’s got to be temperate, he has to watch his diet, has to watch his weight, has to watch his sleep, has to watch whatever he does; then there’s the rest of us.

“...Of course, they *do this* so that they may receive a corruptible crown... [super bowl ring; NBA Championship; Davis Cup, whatever] ...but we... [we’re in this calling for]: ...are striving for an incorruptible crown.... [the crown of life] ...I, therefore, so run, not as one who is uncertain; so also I fight, not as beating the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection ... [his body and his mind and everything.] ...lest, after preaching to others, I myself might be rejected” (vs 25-27).

Now that’s a good thought for every minister, for those who may be listening to this, because we’ll see when we get to the latter part of James 1 that he’s talking about braggadocio ministers and all this sort of thing, and the world is filled with them; we don’t need them; God doesn’t need them.

Paul is going to say, ‘I could be a castaway’ and he wrote all of these fantastic things for us. Hey, we better as ministers ‘take heed, lest we fall.’ If we think we stand, we better take heed, lest we fall, and there are going to be a good many of them fall. I can guarantee you there will, because I’m holding in my hands heresy. It’s going to happen!

The Apostle Paul is talking to elders; He’s talking to ministers, 1-Peter 5:2: “Feed the flock of God *that is* among you, exercising oversight not by compulsion... [being forced to] ...but willingly; not in fondness of dishonest gain, but *with an eager attitude*; not as exercising lordship over *your* possessions; but *by* being examples to the flock of God.... [that’s what it needs to be] ...And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you shall receive an unfading, eternal crown of glory” (vs 2-4).

2-Timothy 4:5: “But *as for* you, be vigilant in all things, endure hardships, do *the* work of an evangelist; fully carry out your ministry.” In other words, have a ministry that is *fully tested and proved*. That’s what it should be.

- not because of name
- not because of personality
- not because of boasting
- not because of bragging
- not because of numbers
- not because of any of that

—but *because of the Word of God!*

Verse 6: “For I am now ready to be offered,

and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith” (vs 6-7). That’s what we need to really keep in mind, brethren, *keeping the faith!*

Verse 8: “From this time forward, a crown of righteousness is laid up for me...” So it’s a:

- crown of life
- crown of glory
- crown of righteousness

Rev. 2:10—here are the ones who have been tried: the Church at Smyrna. They’ve really been:

- tried
- chased down
- run down
- thrown into prison
- persecuted
- blasphemed against by the synagogue of Satan

Revelation 2:10: “Do not fear any of the things that you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast *some* of you into prison, that you may be tried... [tested, proved] ...and you shall have tribulation ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.”

It talks about a coming trial with the synagogue of Satan, which is coming. *It is coming! Coming! Coming!* You can just see it marching down the road; that *mark of the beast* is going to be here one of these days, not too far away.

Revelation 3:9: “Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who proclaim themselves to be Jews and are not, but do lie. Behold, I will cause them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.”

(go to the next track)

Verse 10: “Because you have kept the Word of My patience...” That is the same word for endurance—isn’t that something? *Kept the word of My endurance, a lot of enduring to do!*

“...I also will keep you from the time of temptation, which *is* about to come upon the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly; hold fast that which you have so that no one may take away your crown” (vs 10-11).

- *the crown of life*
- *the crown of righteousness*

Let’s see the crown that Jesus is going to have, after *He wore the crown of thorns*. Lest anyone think they’re having troubles, lest anyone think that their trials are worse than anything else, think of what Christ has gone through, and that will

help you.

Revelation 19:11: “And I saw heaven open; and behold, a white horse; and He Who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He does **judge and make war**.... [that’s the wrath and the anger of God] ... And His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* **many crowns**; and He had a name written that no one knows except Him.... [He’s going to have many crowns] ...And *He was* clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and His name is The Word of God” (vs 11-13).

Then He has on His vesture, v 16: “And on *His* garment and on His thigh He has a name written: King of kings and Lord of lords.”

Revelation 20:6: “Blessed and Holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power. But they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” So, we’re going to be kings and priests. We’re going to have crowns: *crowns of life, crowns of righteousness*. We may have to go through some trials here, but keep your eyes on the things that are ahead. All this is tied up within for those who are loving Him.

James 1:13: “Do not let anyone who is tempted say, ‘I am being tempted by God,’ because God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself tempts no one *with evil*.” It’s impossible for God to sin. God does not tempt with evil, does not happen. He sets before us choices.

Deuteronomy 30:15: “Behold, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil.”

Verse 19: “...Therefore, **choose life, so that both you and your seed may live**, that you may love the LORD your God” (vs 19-20). The Scriptures in the Old Testament really are not much different than the New Testament. Same thing! ***He sets before us choices!***

James 1:13: “...He Himself tempts no one *with evil*.” He doesn’t come along and tempt you to break the laws of God. He doesn’t come along like Satan the devil did to Jesus and say, ‘If You be the Son of God change these rocks into bread. If You be the Son of God cast Yourself down off this pinnacle. If You want to rule the world now, because I will give it to You, fall down and worship me.’

Those are temptations to do evil, which do not come from God. God does not send that kind of temptation to us. Ours is whether we’re going to choose to do God’s way or not. But here’s what happens:

Verse 14: “But each one...”—present tense participle, each individual. That’s why I stressed on

the thing concerning individual salvation.

“...is tempted when he is drawn away and is **enticed by his own lust**” (v 14). That’s the process that happens when you sin. God sets before you the choices. *You* ought to make up in your mind what it is that *you* ought to do. And what is it that the human mind always does? *Justifies what it does!* ‘Every way of a man is clean in his own eyes.’ I look back at the things that I have done and I see where they are wrong. I’ve justified them in my mind, because you have to have it just in your mind before you do it. That’s not God! That’s *your own* lust. Enticed means *deceived, tricked*, many times willingly, *wrong thinking*, “...enticed by his own lust.”

Verse 15: “And after lust has conceived... [compares it to conception] ...it gives birth to sin...” There’s the process. But from conception to birth there are a lot of things that have to take place. Just like from conception until birth there’s got to be a lot of growing of this.

I just draw your attention to the whole sin of David and Bathsheba. You could write that whole lesson. Take these Scriptures and study the whole sin of David and Bathsheba. Each one is being tempted. He was and she was. She said, ‘I’m going to put my bath on the roof so the king can see me.’ The king said, ‘Well, this looks pretty good. I’m going to look down from the roof and see her. Why, this is great! I’m going to send...’—you know the whole thing. He sent a servant over there and he said, ‘Well, bring her over here.’ And he said, ‘Voila, boy this is great! I’m the king. I can do anything I want.’ Guess you know the whole account.

- Did it grow? *Yes, it grew and grew and grew!*
  - *Did it bring forth death? Yes!*
    - ✓Uriah the Hittite, Bathsheba’s husband was killed
    - ✓the baby of the adulterous affair died
  - Did David repent? *Yes!*
- There’s a perfect example of that.
- Did God send the woman? *No!*
  - Did God cause it to be? *No!*

God had the choice there, David, ‘*Choose My way or not.*’ There’s the difference.

“...when it is completely finished... [after it is done] ...brings forth death. Do not deceive yourselves, my beloved brethren. Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation, nor shadow of turning” (vs 15-17). ***Tremendous verse!***

- Why do people do the things that they do, which are wrong and sinful and follow



evil?

- Have you ever thought about it?
- *Because of their carnal mind, that is true!*
- But what are they thinking they are going to get from it? *They are going to succeed; they are going to get every good and perfect thing by sinning!*
- What do you think organized crime is based upon? *They take, they loot, they steal and they prosper for a while!*

So he's saying 'don't deceive yourselves, my beloved brethren; you're not going to get those things by taking, by sinning.' All we have to do is just look at the whole episode of Adam and Eve in Gen. 3—right?

- she looked
- she saw
- she tasted
- she ate
- she gave
- they ate
- they sinned

Death was given to them! Exactly the same thing. What did they want? *They wanted to be like God!* What did Satan say? 'You can be like God, my way—not God's way—my way is better. You can take it and have it now.' So, there's the same thing.

Verse 17: "Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is variation nor shadow of turning."

What is one of the most famous verses that Protestantism likes to use? John 3:16: For God so loved the world that **He gave** His only begotten Son..."

- Isn't that the greatest gift?
- Isn't that the most perfect gift?
- *Yes!*
- What is the Holy Spirit called? *The gift of God, the gift of the Holy Spirit!*

When you stop and think about it:

- What one thing in life, of anything, does anyone of us have that wasn't given to us, one way or the other?

God gave us:

- life
- health
- whatever we have
- hands

With those hands, we can do wonderful things or we can do awful evil things.

- eyes

With these eyes we can do wonderful things or do evil things.

I could give three sermons on this. Please get your concordance and study: give, giving, giveth, gave, gavest—we'll cover just a couple.

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God gave us:

- life
- health
- whatever we have
- hands

With those hands, we can do wonderful things or we can do awful evil things.

- eyes  
with these eyes we can do wonderful things or do evil things.
- the mind

With this mind that God has given us to make choices, the only thing of His whole creation that He has given a mind to make choices.

We can do wonderful things, creative things or we can do evil things. That's why we are not to say to God, that we are tempted with evil; that we're going to get good by doing evil. What was the Apostle Paul accused of? He was accused of saying, 'Let us do evil that good may abound' (Rom. 3). So whenever, these things come in mind, they are called the imagination.

Here's what it is, here's what we need to do when those things come along. Here is how to handle it. This is the most important thing of all.

2-Corinthians 10:4 "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the overthrowing of strongholds." Where there is:

- the lust
- the envy
- the jealousy
- the greed

What did Jesus say of the heart of man? 'For out of the heart of man, proceed all of these evil things':

- murders

- adulteries
- thefts
- lusts
- covetousness
- fornication
- evil sayings
- foolish thoughts

—all come out of the heart.

And today, I think we have a more peculiar problem with this than any other generation, because we are bombarded by TV. You can be watching TV and all of a sudden something is going to be thrown on there which is just absolutely miserable. I don't care how quickly you hit the mute or you hit the change station, its going to affect your mind, because everything you see, hear, do or say is recorded somewhere in your mind.

*You've got to cast it down* and believe me, there are times when it plants thoughts in your mind that you don't even know are there. If you don't think that is true, try getting some stupid commercial jingle out of your head after you've listened to it too much. I imagine, I could say some little jingle here, and you could give me the answer just like that, because you've heard the commercial. I won't try that.

Verse 5: "Casting down *vain* imaginations..." That's where it is, right here. That's where we need to control the sin, control the mind.

"...and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ" (v 5). That's how you overcome sin and temptation and lust and greed and all these things that are in there. That's why the longer that you're converted, the more that you understand God's Word, the more miserable you understand how your own human nature is. I do! You do! You might say, 'Boy, that's not too much self-esteem.' Well, it's not, because we're to not have self-esteem. ***We're to boast in God!*** That's *our* esteem!

Now we could go on, there're many, many other things here. Let me just give you some Scriptures that you can write down, that you can study:

- Eph. 5:2: 'He gave His Son...'
- 1-John 3:24: 'He has given us His Spirit...'

It's amazing, brethren, how much you can get out of everyone of these Scriptures; a little bit different viewpoint every time you go through it. We are not reading a Scripture that we have not covered many times in the past.

Revelation 2:7: "The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches. To the one who overcomes... [the one who is the winner,

the victorious one] ...I will give... [God is the One Who is giving] ...*the right* to eat of the tree of life that is in *the* midst of the paradise of God."

v 10: "...and ***I will give*** you a crown of life."

v 17: "The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who overcomes... [or the victorious one] ...***I will give the right*** to eat of the hidden manna; and ***I will give*** him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knows except the one who receives it."

All the way through—***I will give! I will give! I will give!*** God is the great Giver! Let's understand even in this physical world, the physical things are there for the just and the unjust. Now granted, there's going to be the penalty for sin, but God still sends the rain. He still gives the food. He still gives food and clothing and raiment and all of this sort of stuff, because God is the great Giver! So, let's really understand that and grasp that. I know in studying this, it was just thrilling to really grasp that *God is constantly giving!*

We're going to see that the finality of God's plan—it is something! I mean, just let this sink into your cranium for a while. You know, lot's of times it's good just to take something and say 'Ok, I'm going to meditate on this and think on this.' Turn some music on in your car if you're driving, just think on that. Not a radio station or you're going to get interrupted with some stupid commercial.

Revelation 21:22: "And I saw no temple in it; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city has no need of the sun, or of the moon, that they should shine in it; because the glory of God enlightens it, and the light of it *is* the Lamb" (vs 22-23).

God is so perfect that in His very being, as He moves there is not one shadow. Can you think on that for a minute? God is so perfect, so righteous, so fantastic and so much light in His being that there is not even the hint of a shadow! That's something— isn't it? That's something to think on! That also ties in with other Scriptures: 'Jesus Christ: the same yesterday, today and forever.' God is the One Who is giving.

James 1:18: "According to His own will... [the Greek there is He having willed it] ...He begat us by *the* Word of Truth..." You can take the Word of Truth: 'In the beginning was Word, the Word was God, was with God, the Word was God,' etc. Jesus Christ is the Word of God. Tie that all together.

"...that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all His created beings" (v 18)—of all His creation.

And that is something, brethren. I mean to really think on that, to really let these things go deep into your heart, mind, soul and being, that God has done that.

Now, in the light of that, let me read to you here concerning choices, very important thing: *The Book of James, Faith, Love & Hope: An Exposition of the Epistle of James* by Spiros Zodhiates. He's one of the men that I have the Greek tapes on and so forth. He's says this of choice, which is really true:

But remember that with God eternal providence and purpose there coexists man's moral freedom. And in this moral freedom must lay the responsibility of man. (Shall We Blame God? Exegetically Speaking; March 2000, by Spiros Zodhiates (pulpithelps.com/www/docs/970-4597)

God has given choice, and if you have free moral agency and free choice you cannot restrict it. God has restricted it by death. If you go too far, you die. Short of blowing up the whole physical earth, God will allow anything that people choose to do. **We are responsible for our choices!** There is free moral agency. God created you and me, free beings capable of choice. No other beings have been created that way in the physical realm.

I mean, you look at the cattle—all these animal worshipers—they all eat grass. They have no choice whether to eat grass or not. That's the way God made them.

- they have no choice when it comes time to breed; they come in heat and they breed
- they have no choice for love; they have no concept of it
- they have no choice to create
- they have no choice to make
- they have no reason to think through, to do

*But we are different.*

We are free to choose and that is what makes us superior to all the other creations of God. We are free to choose, yes, but we are not free to choose the consequences of our choice...

*That's a profound statement!*

...for those are determined by the eternal purposes and laws of God. Without this ability to choose there could be no perfection and no satisfaction resulting from the right choice.

That's why when we go to God every good and perfect gift comes from God.

Verse 19. "For this reason, my beloved

brethren, let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, because man's wrath... [vengeance as it were] ...does not work out God's righteousness (vs 19-20).

You think about that! How many times has just the anger of a man been vented to try and accomplish the righteousness of God? I ask myself: How many times has my anger been vented? There is a time for 'righteous indignation.' There is a time to be angry and as it says 'and sin not' and 'don't let the sun set on your anger' (Eph. 4).

So, there's a right kind of anger, but you're not going to accomplish God's way by just being angry. It isn't going to do it. And in this case, it's wrathful. You taking into your hands the consequences that God is going to bring and *you're* determining those consequences. That's what it means. It won't be!

Verse 21: "Therefore, having rid yourselves of all filthiness and all *the* abounding of wickedness around you, then in meekness accept for yourselves the implanted Word, which *is* able to save your lives." In other words, turn yourself completely to God and this is ridding yourselves—there's the work you have to do as we covered: 'casting down imaginations.'

Verse 22: "Then be doers of *the* Word..."—*yourself*s. Too many people all look out and they say, 'He's not doing that, she's not doing that, therefore, I don't have to.' Don't we do that lot's of times? Especially our kids? He did/she did; no/yes—right! And you try and sort this little argument out

Verse 22: "Then be doers of *the* Word, and not only hearers, deceiving your own selves..." There are a lot of people who like to hear. There are a lot of people who love to hear and even attentively, but they don't go out and do.

"...because if anyone is a hearer of *the* Word and not a doer, this one is like a man considering his natural face in a mirror. Who, after looking at himself, went away and immediately forgot what he was like. But the one who has looked into *the* perfect law of [liberty] freedom..." (vs 22-25).

Now, I'll have to elaborate on that a little more next time. It is the law of liberty. Why are the laws of God called the 'law of liberty'? *Because in keeping them we are free from sin!*

Romans 7:12: "Therefore, the Law *is* indeed Holy..." When does the law come against you? *When you sin!*

Protestants think that we are saved; they quote the verse that 'Jesus has redeemed us from the

curse of the Law' by meaning that Jesus has redeemed us so we don't have to keep any law, because the Law is a curse. **No!** The Law is not a curse. The Law **defines** right and wrong. The Law **defines** what is right. The breaking of the law is what brings the curse, but the Law of itself is Holy.]

"...and the commandment Holy and righteous and good" (v 12).

Brethren, if we do like Jesus said, 'If you are loving Me, keep My commandments.' So if we are loving God and keeping His commandments it is the *law of liberty*. Just like today, the laws of the land:

- Do you know all the laws of the land? *No, you don't know all the laws of the land!*
- Do you keep all the laws of the land? *You keep all the laws of the land, because you're not trying to break any!*

So, therefore until you break one, it has no power on you. **Your choice is to obey!** When you break the law and the power of the law—through the law, the court, the policeman, a fine, a late payment or whatever—comes upon you, then you have to pay. That's why it's called the *law of liberty*:

- it is good
- it is Holy
- it is spiritual
- it is fine

James 1:25: "...and has continued in *it*... [it shows a continuation always] ...this one himself has not become a forgetful hearer, but is a doer of *the* work.... [not only the Word, but the work] ...This one shall be blessed in his actions.... [deeds in the *King James*; whatever you do] ... If anyone among you considers himself to be religious, and does not control his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this ones religion *is* vain.... [of no account] ... Pure and undefiled religion before God and *the* Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their afflictions, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (vs 25-27).

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) James 1:6, 8-12, 9
- 2) Matthew 5:3-6
- 3) James 1:9-10
- 4) Matthew 6:28-29
- 5) Matthew 13:18-21
- 6) Psalm 1:1-6
- 7) James 1:12-16, 12, 2-3, 12
- 8) Romans 8:28

- 9) John 14:15
- 10) 1 Peter 5:8-10
- 11) James 1:12
- 12) 1 Corinthians 9:24-27
- 13) 1 Peter 5:2-4
- 14) 2 Timothy 4:5-8
- 15) Revelation 2:10
- 16) Revelation 3:9-11
- 17) Revelation 19:11-13, 16
- 18) Revelation 20:6
- 19) James 1:13
- 20) Deuteronomy 30:15, 19-20
- 21) James 1:13-17
- 22) John 3:16
- 23) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5
- 24) Revelation 2:7, 10, 17
- 25) Revelation 21:22-23
- 26) James 1:18-25
- 27) Romans 7:12
- 28) James 1:25-27

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 7
- Genesis 22
- Hebrews 11
- Genesis 3
- Romans 3
- Ephesians 5:2
- 1 John 3:24
- Ephesians 4

#### Also referenced: Books

- *The Christian Passover* by Fred Coulter
- *The Book of James, Faith, Love & Hope: An Exposition of the Epistle of James* (Exegetical Commentary Series) by Spiros Zodhiates

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## Epistle of James III Making Judgments

Fred R. Coulter

It's very unusual that if you survey the New Testament, you have in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John the personal words of Jesus Christ and His personal ministry.

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His **only** begotten Son, so that everyone..." That makes it a personal, individual thing. So, the whole perspective of the New Testament is

- a personal God
- a personal Savior
- a personal message

as well as for us in a group, that is true. But everything comes down to **personally** doing what God wants.

Outside of the book of Acts, which is a history of mostly Paul's ministry, what are all of the other books of the New Testament outside of Revelation called? *They are called epistles or letters.* They are written in a very different way than the Old Testament. There are individual instructions there, that is true, but the Old Testament is written not from a personal message point of view to you as an individual like the New Testament.

What we have is the personal letters from the apostles of Jesus Christ. Here in James we have the brother of Jesus Christ *to us, preserved for us!* That's unique. There is no other book, no other book outside the New Testament that has those letters, which are personal, that we can read for instruction that we can read for inspiration and all of the things that are there from God; same way with the instructions from Titus and Timothy concerning the ministry. *Those were personal instructions from God to the ministry!* Of course, whenever these things are not followed, *you have the difficulties involved!*

So, in going through the Epistle of James, let's look at it that particular way and let's see how that James is, in fact, doing this in writing to the brethren. Of course, all the way through the New Testament everyone is called 'brethren,' meaning that *family relationship with God and with Jesus Christ.* That has to be meaningful to us. Let's review just a few of these verses here. I want to emphasize something that didn't get recorded, because I think that it needs to be there and needs to be said.

James 1:17: "Every good act of giving and

every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation, nor shadow of turning. According to His own will..." (vs 17-18). That is *God having willed it.* That's a little awkward in translation, so I put it here *according to His own will.*

Let's see a little bit more about this *will of God.* When you stop and think about it, when you compare the calling of God, which is His own will:

- a personal calling
- a personal salvation
- with a personal Savior
- with a personal message
- with a personal relationship
- with personal prayers
- personally answered

Let's go to, speaking of a personal God and personal Savior and personally answering prayer, where Jesus said:

John 16:26: "In that day, you shall ask in My name; and I do not tell you that I will beseech the Father for you." It's not a secondhand thing. It's not *he said/she said.* It is you directly to God. Isn't that something?

What does that do to the Catholic doctrine of intercessory saints? *It doesn't stand up!* It is not true. So what I want you to do, as we're going through this, is compare this personal relationship that we are to have with God and then with each other vs a 'religion,' which is a means of trying to make oneself feel good and appear good. That's the difference. I don't think it really quite solidified in my mind as clearly as it has until going through the book of James here.

Verse 27: "For the Father Himself..." ***Personal! The Father Himself is loving you!*** With that kind of confidence and with that kind of strength...

James 1:17: "Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation, nor shadow of turning. According to His own will..." (vs 17-18)—***having willed it,*** because He is our Father and a *personal* God, with His only *personal* Son. We have to reciprocate in love.

John 16:27: "For the Father Himself loves

you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.”

This is something to really keep in mind, understand, treasure and thank God for. And realize this more as a minister, too: ***that the whole purpose of a minister is to keep pointing everyone to God in this personal relationship.***

Now, ***since God has willed it***—let’s think about that for a minute—and has called you and has given His Spirit, *can any man* take that away? ***No!*** As a minister keeping this in mind for a ministry, how then should we, as ministers, treat the brethren? ***Exactly the way the Apostle Paul said: that ‘you are God’s husbandry!’*** In other words, what is being done, the seed that is planted in you from God the Father, is from God. So we are like caretakers who oversee what’s going on. ***Caretakers don’t overrule, overlord what is going on.***

I’m just emphasizing that here, because I have talked to quite a few people on the phone recently who are still suffering from the throes of a tyrannical ministry. It’s very hard to recover from that, very difficult to recover from that, and so I just wanted to mention that and emphasize it.

Ephesians 1:4: “According as He has personally chosen us...”

- God chose us!
- God elected us!
- God has called us!

That’s what’s so fantastic, brethren.

“...for Himself before *the* foundation of the world... [in other words, in His overall plan] ... in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love” (v 4). We’re going to see that that’s why this is so important when we come to the second chapter in the book of James, because ***God has called us in love.***

What does this do to ***judging?*** ***It changes it quite considerably!***

Verse 5: “Having predestinated us for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure **of His own will**”—God having ***willed it!***

That really is humbling, brethren, when you really let that sink in and just grasp your mind. It’s something that you grow in. It’s something you can’t run up and claim. It’s something that you can’t appropriate to yourself. No one appropriates Jesus Christ. That’s where the Protestants are wrong; they say that you ‘appropriate Jesus Christ.’ ***No!*** If there is any appropriating, He appropriates you by calling, If

you appropriate Christ, what do you do? ***You’re telling God what to do!*** And it doesn’t work that way. “...according to the good pleasure of His own will.”

Verse 6: to *the* praise of *the* glory of His grace, wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*... [accepted with all your faults, mistakes and difficulties] ...in Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence; having made known to us the mystery of His own will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself” (vs 6-9).

Those are tremendous, tremendous Scriptures there. I think in this world as miserable and as rotten as it is and as terrible as things are in the world, we need to turn here and really understand what God has done for us and ***thank God*** and ***praise God.*** That doesn’t mean we don’t have troubles; that doesn’t mean we don’t have difficulties. We may have a passel full of them, but nevertheless, we’re called ***according to God’s will*** and He’s going to see us through it, one way or the other.

James 1:18: “According to His own will, He begat us by *the* Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all His created beings.” Obviously we’re greater than any of the animals, obviously we’re greater than anything that God has created in the inanimate world. Otherwise, why make us? Also, we’re the hardest to tame and we are the most difficult.

Now because of this—and I’ll tell you this is so true—the longer that you are in the Church of God, the longer that you have this personal relationship with God, the more you will see the validity of v 19. And I’ve made many, many mistakes just like it says in James 3, with the tongue we all sin constantly.

Verse 19: “For this reason, my beloved brethren, let every man be quick to hear... [to hear the *Word of Truth*] ...slow to speak... [*speaking in judgments, comments* or things like that] ...slow to anger, because man’s wrath does not work out God’s righteousness” (vs 19-20).

And I’ve been thinking an awful lot on this. I never will forget that Bible study in Pasadena in 1972 where the leading minister got up there... You have to know this background: we were all supposed to begin fleeing to a place of safety in the first part of January 1972, to go to a place of safety in Petra. That didn’t happen. So, it was denied that that was ever said, but it was said. It was denied that that was ever preached. I know

that it was preached, because I myself preached it. When we saw the cities burning down in 1969, guess what we were all preaching? *Brethren, the end is near!*

With this also in the background: that Herbert Armstrong's son—for the umpteenth how many times—had to be disfellowshipped and relieved of all broadcasting duties because he was whore-mongering. They were trying to cover this up and not let anyone know, and yet, those who were in Pasadena knew what was going on. You just don't take someone off of radio and television and say that he's just under stress. It all came down on the Church leader that week:

- no Petra
- son got caught whore-mongering; taking advantage of young girls right there at the college
- kicked out of the Church
- the whole Church trying to know about it
- getting up there trying to deny it
- then trying to tell us that God substituted going to a place of safety by opening the door that we now had ads in *Readers Digest* magazine

With all of that as a caveat for the background, I want to show you that ***man's anger does not work the righteousness of God***. He got up there and as angry as could be, he said, 'Brethren, you are all a bunch of dumb sheep.' That whole auditorium was deadly silent. Then he said, 'These rumors about my son are not true.' The whole congregation was beaten down. Now inside—I don't know what is going on inside someone else's mind—but I know what was going on inside my mind, which was: *we may be sheep, but we're not supposed to be dumb*. Are we not to grow in grace and knowledge? Which would get me in trouble with men, but not with God.

You can probably see many different examples of a man's anger not working out God's righteousness. You can cover this in marital relations and in childrearing. I can look back and see the mistakes that I made in childrearing. And many have made mistakes and it's almost today—you're dammed if you do and you're dammed if you don't—because the world is such that if you try and be nice they are spoiled, and if you try and discipline them it's too much. If you try and spank them, they can haul you off and put you in jail for child abuse. They are told at school that if your parents do that to you, you come and tell us, because we're the good bureaucrats and *we* will take care of your parents for you.

Plus then you've got television, rock

music, all the peer pressure and all of this stuff going on, so it's very, very difficult for childrearing. If you have children, I can speak from experience, it is going to be tough. That doesn't necessarily mean that you have failed. That doesn't necessarily mean that I have failed, because we are also talking about the *will* of our own children. I know there have been times when I have been really angry and when I shout—I can shout really loudly.

Did it work out God's righteousness? *No, it didn't work out God's righteousness!* What happens? *Well, mostly it causes more problems!* Then you feel badly about it later and then what do you have to do? *You have to say you're sorry and 'you know I didn't mean to say that,'* and all that sort of stuff. I'm sure that is true and I know that's how I feel about it.

That's why it says, "...slow to speak, slow to anger" (v 19). So, you don't try and make your anger work God's righteousness. There is a time for righteous indignation! Obviously, yes that is true. Of course, we all learn it. We all say, 'If I had known these things as a child when I was growing up, I probably would have avoided a lot of these things.' Yes, Amen, true. We can stroke one there for it. Now, when our children are growing up and have grown up, then we say, 'Boy, if I would have known what I know now as a parent and used that back then, things would have been different.'

Let's hope that our children somewhere down the road, will learn and God will intervene in spite of our mistakes and call them and lead them to understanding and Truth so that they can recover themselves also.

Then the cycle starts all over again. *Yes, it does!* What generation has this not happened to? *Not a single generation!* That's why James is such a living epistle.

Verse 21: "Therefore... [before you try and work out the righteousness of God] ...having rid yourselves of all filthiness and all *the* abounding wickedness around you..." (v 21).

You get around people and their language and you start picking it up. I know the hardest thing in the world is if you get around people who swear—and you have no control over them and you don't want to hear it—all you can do except put your fingers in your ears or tell them to shut up and some people you can't tell them to shut up. If you do you might have a fist in your mouth. Then you go along and then what happens? *It plays back in your mind*—right? *Yes!* I know it's happened. It's happened to you. It's happened to

me. I don't think there is anything different that's happened to me that hasn't happened to you.

What do you do? *You pray and ask God to get it out of your mind!* And that is what James is saying here.

"...*the* abounding of wickedness around you... [the personalized salvation] ...then in meekness accept for yourselves the implanted Word, which *is* able to save your lives" (v 21). This implanted Word is going to cause us to do certain things that God wants us to do if we really act upon what we believe. He says once you have the implanted Word in your life and that you yourselves accept it and act upon it.

Verse 22: "Then be doers of *the* Word..."—yourselves. That is the verb in the Greek that is called *middle-voice*. It is something that you, yourself are doing. Unfortunately, that is missed so many times in the translations. They have virtually not translated a single middle-voice verb as *doing yourself*.

For example, v 13: "...and **He Himself**..." That's a middle-voice verb; *God Himself!* That makes it much more personal and much more powerful than saying, 'and **He** is tempting no one with evil.' But **He Himself**, originating from God personally, He's not doing it. So, that middle-voice is very important.

Verse 21: "...having rid yourselves..." That means don't try and go here and correct the whole world. You rid yourself. It has to start with you. It's the same way.

Verse 22: "...Be doers of *the* Word..."—yourself. It is meant to be very convicting. I find the book of James very convicting to me personally. I look and see all the things based in here that I ought to be doing. And I see the things that I am not doing.

Verse 22: "Then be doers of *the* Word, and not only hearers..." Not just liking to hear the Word of God. You know what it says in Ezek. 33, 'As for My people, they come and sit before You as a people, come and sit before you and say, *let us hear the Word of the Lord.*' So you tell them the Word of the Lord and they say, 'My that's marvelous and wonderful' and they go on their way, because You're like someone who is a fine tuned instrument speaking to them.' But they won't do them. Unfortunately we all have that problem in one degree or other, because if you are only a hearer then you are just deceiving yourself.

Again, here is the middle-voice verb, "...*deceiving your own selves*" (v 22). Why is that the worst kind of deception? *Because you*

*actually believe it!* That's worse than telling a lie to someone else, because you know you've told a lie to them. You can separate that out from Truth. When you lie to yourself constantly and you deceive yourself and you believe that lie, that's the worse kind, because it is so deeply ingrained in the individual.

It is so hard to admit it—isn't it? *That's the hardest one in the world to admit!* That's why I gave you the title of the book: *The Lies We Believe*—the #1 cause of our unhappiness—very good book. Very appropriate, because that's exactly what it says here in James.

I didn't get this book just because of this, but I happen to get it, because one day I was going into our big supermarket down there in Hollister. I walked by and that title jumped right out at me. I picked it up and started leafing through it. As you know I'm a book 'phileo'—*a book lover*. So, I picked it up and said, 'Oh! Look at that.' And I started reading a little bit of it there. I said, 'Boy, this ties right in with the series we did on *Satan's Ten Most Believable Lies*. I started going through this and said, 'Oh man, this is really good.'

Verse 22: "...deceiving your own selves, because if anyone is a hearer of *the* Word and not a doer, this one is like a man considering his natural face in a mirror. Who, after looking at himself, went away and immediately **forgot** what he was like" (vs 22-24). That's the tense of the verb, *forgot*, which means he immediately, past tense, *put it out of his mind!* Isn't that what we do? Why do we put off until the last minute whatever we do? It's the same kind of thing; we avoid it. **We avoid confronting ourselves in the mirror of God's Word!** And that's the whole thing that is here, that's the whole thing that is what we're being taught.

Verse 25: "But the one who has looked into the perfect law of freedom and **has continued in it**..." [tie that right back to vs 22-23 *being a doer*] ... this one **himself**... [the personal, individual, initiative and responsibility] ...has not become a forgetful hearer, **but is a doer** of the work. This one shall be blessed in his actions. If anyone among you considers himself to be religious, and does not control his tongue..." (vs 25-26).

Now what does this mean? *You go back to man's anger!* It's not working out the righteousness of God. So if a person seems to be 'religious' or considers himself 'religious' and is not controlling his tongue through:

- bragging about his religion, which could be
- bragging about how good he is, which



- could be
- bragging about how he loves the Lord, which could be

Have you ever wondered when you get around people who *seem* to be religious and they say, 'Praise the Lord, hallelujah, bless the Lord.' How that it—even though you know God—when it's said in such a way as this, what does it do? *It's just like taking fingernails on a chalkboard!*

Look at all these 'religious' people that have been exposed. I think they were set up for it, too, as well as their own faults and vanities. 20/20 took three Protestant TV preachers—this is in addition to Jimmy Swaggart—you talk about empty and vain and self-deceiving; it is incredible! One man in particular, and he just preaches on faith and he is just really right in there. His house burned down and 'Oh brethren, I appreciate all the offerings. We were without clothes and had no place...' He had three other mansions. *Mansions!* Sound like something we knew of? *Yes!* These were mansions, replete with Mercedes Benz, swimming pools, custom decorating inside, 6000 sq ft, servants, and yet, on his TV show he shows the house that was burned down and now he's begging for money.

Then it shows them how that they go to Haiti, if you want an orphanage go to Haiti. You have unscrupulous people down there in Haiti who will put up a sign outside their orphanage, your sign. You take a video picture of it. You run back on your little video show and you tell them, 'Brethren, send money for these poor...' If you look at these things they show the same children over and over again. It's all a rip-off. They send anywhere from 5% to 15%, maybe 20% of it to the one who runs the orphanage and he takes most of that for himself. And he's propositioned many of the 'religious' leaders to come down to Haiti and 'we will set you up with bona fide pictures and you can run this on your television show and you can use this to raise funds.'

I want you to read this, again, v 26: "If anyone among you considers himself to be religious, and does not control his tongue..."

- but is bragging about it
  - but is saying how good he is
  - how many people he's reaching
  - how many are converted
  - how many magazines
- Have we heard this before?*
- how many ministers
  - how many are attending
  - how much is the offering

- how great we are

What does the Bible say? *Mercy triumphs over judgment!* We need mercy, not that kind of stupidity and nonsense. When I talk to people that I haven't talked to for a long time, and maybe they're attending another church. What is the first question they ask you? How many are attending? Does that equal righteousness? *No! It doesn't equal righteousness!* How many were with Elijah? *None!*

Now for those ministers who were caught, 1-Corinthians 10:12: "Therefore, let the one who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall." What does the Scripture say? *Oh, how the mighty have fallen!* We don't gloat in that either. God says, 'Don't rejoice in the day that your enemy falls, lest the same thing happen to you.' Even God Himself is not desirous that the wicked should die, but that they should repent. Those are powerful words, brethren. *Those are powerful words!* Those are really meaningful words. While I'm sitting here going through this with you, I'm preaching to myself. There is a very important thing that all of us ministers have to do.

Paul said that he had to bring himself into captivity lest after he preached to others he himself might be a castaway. I want you to substitute the word *Christian* for *Jew*, because that is applicable. He says that a Jew:

Romans 2:29: "Rather he *is* a Jew who *is* one inwardly, and circumcision *is* of the heart."

Verse 17: "Behold, you are called a Jew, [Christian] and you yourself rest in the law, and boast in God... [not controlling the tongue] ... and know *His* will, and approve of the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and are persuaded *that* you yourself are **a guide of the blind, a light for those in darkness, an instructor of the foolish**, a teacher of babes, having the form of the knowledge and of the Truth *contained* in the law. You then... [this is what it has to be for every one of us, especially ministers] ...who are teaching another, do you not teach yourself also?...." (vs 17-21). The *King James* says, '*teachest thou not thyself?*' Which means *are you not teaching yourself?*

"...You who preach, 'Do not steal,' are you stealing? You who say, 'Do not commit adultery,' are you committing adultery? You who abhor idols, are you committing sacrilege? You who boast in law, are you dishonoring God through your transgression of the Law? For through you the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, exactly as it is written" (vs 21-24).

I submit that those ministers who do these kinds of things—as I just related and the things we have been personally through in our own experience:

- Does it not blaspheme the name of God?
- Does it not discourage people?
- Does it not cause people to fall by the wayside, because of those kinds of things?
- *Yes, absolutely it does!*

That's why it's there. We are to learn from God's Word, too.

James 1:26: "If anyone among you considers himself to be religious, and does not control his tongue, but deceives his own heart, **this ones religion is vain!**"

Now here's the test. If you think your heart is so good and if you think you are so righteous, he gives the test. What would the Bible call those people of v 26? Let's see what Jesus called them.

It's amazing how much of James fits right in with the Sermon on the Mount, absolutely amazing! We're talking about religious people—right? *Yes!*

Matthew 6:1: "Beware *that* you do not bestow your alms in the sight of men in order to be seen by them... [that you appear to be religious] ...otherwise you have no reward with your Father Who *is* in heaven. Therefore, when you give *your* alms, do not sound the trumpet before you, as the **hypocrites...**" (vs 1-2).

Now in *A Harmony of the Gospels* you will see that I translated that *sanctimonious pretenders*, which is the most accurate translation of this, because they appear religious. They are pretending, *sanctimonious pretenders!*

The next time you watch the religious channel, see if you can pick out the authentic from the non-authentic. I think Zola Levitt is pretty authentic. I would have to say I like Zola Levitt even though he talks about going to heaven and hell—it's strange. He is a converted Jew, who keeps the Holy Days, but doesn't preach that other people should keep them. Now, that's a strange one. I wouldn't put him in a hypocritical category. I think he is pretty well down to earth and pretty honest and there ought to be many more preachers like him.

I think Dr. [Charles] Stanley, He's pretty good, he's a tall guy with glasses. He's pretty good. Those are the only ones I watch. I don't watch them all that often, but you know sometimes the programming Sunday from 5-8 is

so bad, especially when there is not football. So I watch it a little bit.

Then there is the one guy who comes on, his name is Hayden. He cries just about all the time; everything is a downer. Then there was this one woman I saw on the Los Angeles channel when I was down there on a trip down to L.A.; all she did was cry, cry, cry, just crying. So, I did my favorite thing, flicked from channel to channel to see if there is anything there and I came back twenty minutes later and guess what? *She's still crying!* So I said, 'This is incredible!' I went through the channels again and came back in about another five minutes and there she is crying. She cried for the whole half hour. Now, it's going to be awfully hard for her to convince me that there's joy in the Lord. ***Hypocrites, sanctimonious pretenders!***

"...as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets... [Remember this was written to Jews—who were what? *In the synagogues!*] ...so that they may have glory from men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward. But *when* you give your alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret shall Himself reward you openly.... [personal relationship with God.] ...And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, in order *that* they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward" (vs 2-5). That they were ***seen of men as religious***. You can take this on and on. You can apply this wherever. This is living Word of God.

We saw something—what was it on television concerning the pope? Here he all dressed up in this thing. Those tremendous pillars that are enthroned over the middle of St. Peter's Basilica, get a good look at them next time, they are serpentine. It's amazing! Absolutely amazing! And there are flies on it. Who is the lord of flies, but Beelzebub? *Who appear to be 'religious'!*

Verse 16: "And when you fast, do not be as the hypocrites, dejected in countenance; for they disfigure their faces in order that they may appear to men to fast. Truly I say to you, they have their reward."

(go to the next track)

Verse 17: "But *when* you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to men to fast, but to your Father Who *is* in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret shall reward you openly" (vs 17-18). Read all of Matt. 23 about the hypocrites causing people to be proselytes and more

double the child of hell than they themselves:

- making broad their phylacteries
- long prayers
- oppressing widows
- taking their money
- making silly little rules

‘He who swears by the temple it is nothing at all, but he who swears by the gold that’s on the temple is a debtor.’ Jesus said, ‘Hypocrite, which sanctifies the temple? The gold, the building or God?’ Then He says, ‘You are like whited sepulchers outside, but inside you are like dead men’s bones, full of filth and all that sort of thing.’ Considers himself to be religious.

I want to cover one thing in Matt. 24, because we have experienced this; people are continuing to experience it. I think when we get into the section there about helping people who are in need—I hope that what we do here, brethren, in being able to help the people on the mailing list—that we can help those who have been spiritually naked and spiritually without food, because of the different things that have happened to them, which we find here:

Matthew 24:42: “Watch, therefore, because you do not know in what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have been watching, and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore, you also be ready. For the Son of man is coming at a time that you do not think. Who then is the faithful and wise servant whom his lord has set over his household, to give them food in due season? **Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he comes shall find so doing**” (vs 42-46). It ties right in with: *be doers of the Word*.

Verse 47: “Truly I say to you, he will set him over all his property. But if that evil servant shall say in his heart... [because he appears ‘religious,’ deceiving himself, his religion is worthless] ...shall say in his heart, ‘My lord delays *his* coming,’ and shall begin to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken” (vs 47-49). You can tie that in physically and spiritually.

- *Physically* they get all involved in alcoholism
- *Spiritually* they get involved in the doctrines of Babylon

Drinking from the cup of Rev. 17. Do we not see that going on today? *Yes, it’s there!*

Verse 50: “The lord of that servant will come in a day that he does not expect, and in an hour

that he does not know. And he shall cut him asunder and shall appoint his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (vs 50-51).

Last night I was watching television, it’s not wrong to watch some television on the Sabbath. It’s a very good lesson. It was called, I entitled it in my mind, *The Fires of Hell*. I don’t think that was the title of it, but that’s what I entitled it in my mind. It showed the operation of those who put out all the oil-well fires in Kuwait. Those were some awesome fires, 700-plus wells burning, all at the same time. Around a lot of these wells were lakes of oil on fire. It showed one of them that was two miles long and eight feet deep of oil burning. You talk about *men*—whew! They went in and put out these fires, risked their lives and the temperatures got up to be 4,000 degrees. I mean, beyond our comprehension.

It showed a close-up of the fires—that’s why I entitled it in my mind *The Fires of Hell*, and here—whoooh! Just blasting out like the roaring of a jet and I thought: What is it like down under the earth, with the things going on in the earth. Thinking about this thing here, **‘weeping and gnashing of teeth’** and the Lake of Fire and all that. And I thought, ‘Oh man, look at that!’ That is awesome, and the courage of those men to get out and do that, unbelievable! They got them all out. They got everyone of them out.

Then it showed the bomb squad. Before they could go in and start putting out the fires they had to have the bomb squad come in and make sure there were no mines, make sure that unexploded explosives from allied bombs and everything were not going to destroy anyone. It showed that the whole desert was covered with the thick film of oil.

I don’t see how they’d spot these things, but they would ride along on the top of the fenders of a jeep. It was a British team. They would look just straight ahead, and that’s the only area that they would work. Then when they were done with a section, they came back and went straight ahead again, came back and went straight ahead again. So you can always see their tracks to the left, because in this particular case they were working to the right.

They would go along and they would spot those mines and I would look at that picture on the TV. I couldn’t see what they were seeing. They would get down there and with a little tiny hand shovel, you know like a little tiny hand spade for a garden, they would move some of that oil film on top. It was just like asphalt, about an

inch to two inches thick, just from the splatter of the oil. It was incredible!

Then it showed how they would go ahead and make up the plastic explosives and then they would take a whole area and then they would blow the whole thing up all at once. And I thought, if that was not living hell in the desert, I don't know! Something, I tell you! You think about it, and I think about it. Think about all the difficulties that we have, they're nothing! It's amazing they could even breathe. They said that they would work 28 days and take 28 days off. They would make upwards between \$1-2,000 a day, while they were working and while they weren't working. It showed some of the methods they used to put these things out. *Awesome!*

But I couldn't help but thinking of 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' and hellfire and brimstone. I know when you look at some of these volcanoes, too, and you see that lava running down! That's what the Lake of Fire is. If you need a little sort of kick in the pants, as it were, to get right with God, look at some of those. That'll help you. Here's the kick in the pants that we are to have:

James 1:27: "Pure and undefiled religion before God and *the* Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their afflictions, **and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.**" That's quite something!

We can apply this many ways, the orphans that are truly orphans, the widows that are truly widows. And I know in our Church we have quite a few widows. I think one of the things that we try and do is to help them in any way that we can. And they do have afflictions. One of the things that we can do is that we can help them with the Word of God, because I think that widows have been oppressed and taken advantage of more than anyone else. There are many other different aspects of it.

"...and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (v 27). And we are not of the world, not to go out and get involved in the world in such a way that we are *partakers of their sins*. What does it say to the people of God concerning Babylon? '*Come out of her, My people, that you be not partakers of her sins and partaker of her plagues*' (Rev. 18).

One other thing I forgot to mention about these fires of hell in the Kuwait oil fires. At 50 yards, if you had your lips exposed they would blister instantly! They had to keep themselves doused with water continuously. They had to wear heavy clothes where the temperature was 125-

degrees without the fires. They had to wear heavy clothes because if any skin were exposed it would **blister instantly**. You could be fried to a crisp in nothing flat.

## JAMES 2

James 2:1 "My brethren..." Notice that everything is *brethren*. He didn't say *my dumb sheep*. *No! he said, "My brethren..."* Now we're going to see that this includes all status. We'll go back and cover it.

Verse 1: "My brethren, do not have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons. Now then, if a man comes into your synagogue wearing gold rings *and dressed* in splendid apparel, and *there* comes in also a poor man in lowly apparel, and you give preference to the one who is wearing the splendid apparel, and say to him, 'Seat yourself here in the best place'; and you say to the poor man, 'Stand over there,' or, 'Sit here under my footstool'; then have you not passed judgment among yourselves, and have made yourselves judges *with evil opinions?*" (vs 1-4).

Let's go back and analyze this. And we will see that, yes indeed, we have all been guilty of these things one way or the other.

"My brethren..." We're talking about rich and poor. What is the one thing that we have in common? Not status, not money. *We have a common salvation of redemption*, whether a person is rich or whether a person is poor. But the human, natural, carnal mind and tendency is that

"...if a man comes into your synagogue wearing gold rings *and dressed* in splendid apparel..."—it could even have the implication of loud, gaudy, expensive clothing.

"...and *there* comes in also a poor man in lowly apparel." Why was this a particularly Jewish problem? Not just necessarily the rich and poor is the problem, but the problem of *discriminating against people*, or *respecting people*, because if you respect persons then you also have to *discriminate*. That doesn't mean you let a thief in your house.

Let's see where it talks about 'respector of persons,' **that God Himself is no 'respector of persons.'** That becomes a very profound and important thing, because the Jews by 'the religion of Judaism,' by the nature of their religion... We just got done with 'if anyone seem to be religious.' Now we're talking about people having 'respect of persons.' The Jews, by the nature of their religion, discriminated against anyone who was not a Jew in social discourse and activity with

one another, as well as the 'synagoga' relationship between Jews and Gentiles.

Now we have a profound thing that takes place in Acts 10. We have a man who was a Gentile. His name was Cornelius. He was a captain of a band of Italian soldiers, because of the Roman occupation. He himself loved God and he himself at the time of the hour of prayer would worship God and all of a sudden an angel said to him, 'Send and go to Peter, who is staying at one Simon the Tanner in the city of Joppa.' So, he sent three men. Peter had this vision; remember the vision of all the animals that were unclean? *Because that's how the Jews picture the rest of the human race in their religion of Judaism!* That's why. It has nothing whatsoever to do whether to eat clean or unclean foods.

I have here this article about a parasitical infection, which is attacking people in the United States now because they are eating half-cooked pork. God says it's unclean in the first place, not fit to be eaten. No question about it. So then, he got hold of Peter and Peter and his group went on down to Cornelius:

Acts 10:25: "And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him *and* fell at *his* feet, worshipping *him*." Peter said, 'You are a smart man. I am the first pope. You better kiss my ring and my feet' **Not there**—is it? So much for appearing 'religious.' So much for haughtiness of Catholicism.

Verse 26: "But Peter raised him up, saying, 'Stand up, for I myself am also a man.'.... [you don't worship human beings] ...And as he was talking with him, he went in and found many gathered together. And he said to them, 'You know that it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew to associate with or come near to anyone of another race....'" (vs 25- 28).

Now, I want to tell you right here that was **not** a Law of God. But that was a law of Judaism. That's why God supernaturally did this to *break down that barrier*. It says that through Christ *He has broken the enmity of the barrier that was between us, making of Jews and Gentiles one body in the Church, in Christ* (Eph. 2). Here's the beginning of the breaking of that by destroying a religious law, which was contrary to the will of God.

Verse 28: "And he said to them, 'You know that it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew to associate with or come near to anyone of another race. But **God has shown me that no man should be called common or unclean**'" (v 28).

There is a respect of persons when the Jews did it that way and it was an inherent problem with Judaism. Then if you have that toward other people, what do you have *within* the congregation of the synagogue? *Those who discriminated between the rich and the poor!*

Verse 34: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth... [after Cornelius was saying to him what happened with the angel and everything] ...*and* said, 'Of a truth I perceive that **God is not a respecter of persons.**'"

Did He not make everyone? *Yes!* Keep that in mind every time you come across some blanket indictment against people in general. It's okay to say, 'we all have evil carnal hearts.' But you stop and think about it, every human species, of every kind, of every race, of every nation, of every— whatever ilk you want to have—

- *all* are created by God, one way or the other
- *all* have sins and evils
- *all* have difficulties and problems

—some of them more singularly difficult than others—

- some more sneaky
- others more base
- some hidden
- some open

—but that's the way humanity is.

So Peter says, v 34: "...Of a truth I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons, but in every nation the one who fears Him and works righteousness is acceptable to Him. The word that He sent to the children of Israel, preaching the Gospel of peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all), you have knowledge of; which declaration came throughout the whole of Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism that John proclaimed *concerning* Jesus, Who was from Nazareth: how God anointed Him with *the* Holy Spirit and with power, *and* He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with Him" (vs 34-38).

And then he finishes the sermon and instantly the Holy Spirit *descends right upon these Gentiles, uncircumcised!*

We're going to see when we get into some other things with the Passover, **that was a tremendous problem**, because it says clearly that you should be circumcised before you take the Passover. And Paul's greatest sin was having uncircumcised Gentiles keep the Passover. **We cannot comprehend the absolute grating of the religious nerves** in standing of Judaism that that would do. But here God is knocking down *all* of

those barriers, gave them the Holy Spirit, the gift of God and he said how can I withstand God.

Verse 47: “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have also received the Holy Spirit as we *did*?’ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they besought him to remain *for* a number of days.” (vs 47-48). Guess what happens when he comes back to Jerusalem?

Acts 11:1: “Now, the apostles and the brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the Word of God; and when Peter went up to Jerusalem, those of *the* circumcision disputed with him, saying, ‘You went in to men who were uncircumcised and did eat with them.’” (vs 1-3)—which we see also presented a great problem—*couldn’t even eat with them!* (Gal. 2). You talk about segregation in the United States down south where they had the black/white:

- black bathrooms
- black fountains
- black restaurants
- sit in the back of the bus

—and all this sort of thing. This society was:

- far more rigid
- far more discriminating
- far more aloof
- far more rigidly controlled by law

Then he rehearsed the whole thing for them and then they understood and they finally said:

Verse 15: “And when I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came upon them, even as *it* also *came* upon us in *the* beginning.” If they smoked pipes, I imagine Peter would have said, ‘Put that in your pipe and smoke it.’ But they don’t.

Verse 16: “Then I remembered the word of *the* Lord, how He had said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with *the* Holy Spirit.’ Therefore, if God also gave them the same gift ...” (vs 16-17)

I want you to understand what a tremendous thing this was, absolutely unprecedented. You talk about a *blow to Judaism*, because they thought Christianity was theirs alone. What a *blow to Judaism* this was, because remember up to that point it only went to the Jews. I don’t know exactly the timeframe of Acts 11, but I think that the Epistle of James was written sometime after Acts 11, but before the problems of Acts 13-15 about the controversy of circumcision, because it’s not mentioned here in the epistle.

Verse 17: “Therefore, if God also gave them the same gift that *was given* to us, who believed on

the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I *to dissent*? Do I have the power to forbid God?”

He had to talk to them that way; otherwise they may have put Peter out of the Church. Now you know why it had to be Peter that did it? *Because at that time he was the leading apostle!* That’s not the doctrine of ‘petrine theology,’ to canonize a pope by any means, but that’s just the way it was.

Verse 18: “And after hearing these things, they were silent; and they glorified God, saying, ‘Then to the Gentiles also has God indeed granted repentance unto life.’ Now, those who had been scattered by the persecution that arose concerning Stephen went through Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, **speaking the Word to no one except Jews only**” (vs 18-19). That’s why when he writing, he’s writing to those in the synagogue.

James 2:2: “Now then, if a man comes into your synagogue wearing gold rings *and dressed* in splendid apparel, and *there* comes in also a poor man in lowly apparel.” There are churches that say, ‘you cannot come in the door unless you meet our dress code.’

- What does this say? *Make no distinction concerning clothing!*
- What if he’s wearing all that he has to wear?
- You going to turn him away from God because of that?

The natural tendency is to *be sycophants to the rich!* ‘A rich man comes to the synagogue; maybe he will leave a good offering. Give him the best seat.’ And the synagogues, even to this day, sell the seats. Did you know that? *The closest one to the pulpit to the highest bidder, especially on the Holy Days!* The important people in the society of the Jews get the main ones, because they give more. James says you are not to do that here. This is not how it’s run.

Who do you suppose of the Jews were the wealthiest, the most religious, and would be accorded the most honor in the synagogue? Since we’re still talking about the Jews? *The Sadducees! The priests!* So they would come in, ‘Oh, yes, oh yes, Rabbi, come right up here and sit in this seat.’ James is saying, ‘Now that you have Christ, you are all rich and poor.’ And as Paul said, ‘free and bond,’ *you are all together in Christ*, not to respect persons.

Verse 3: “And you give preference to the one who is wearing the splendid apparel, and say to him, ‘Seat yourself here in the best place’; and you say to the poor man, ‘Stand over there,’ or, ‘Sit here under my footstool’” (v 3). There are also areas in

the synagogue where they do not have any pews or seats at all and that's where the poor people generally stand.

Remember the parable that Jesus said about those who *love the best seats* at the Feasts, 'When you go to a Feast don't take the last seat, because lest you go up and take the first seat and then someone else is going to come and take your seat and you be embarrassed and told to sit down here at the end.' Those are the ones who put themselves forward. Then you have the ones who take and place others forward that way. So, you have preferences. You can call this snobbery.

I do these things every once in a while; I walked up to a bank teller. This was a thing after Anita Hill and men can't be men and women can't be women and even if you look at a woman it's sexual harassment and all this sort of thing. So, I walked up and then there was a big controversy about the woman who leads the NOW gang, she's a lesbian, cheated on her husband because she's lesbian, all this sort of thing. I mentioned a little bit about it and she said, 'Well, why can't men just be men and women be women?' And I said, 'Now, please be honest with me, isn't it true that every woman whenever she meets another woman; the first thing that she normally would do in her mind is to look at the woman, see how she's dressed, see what makeup she has, see everything about her instantly and make a judgment.' She said, 'Yes.'

And I said, 'Isn't it true that many times women think that they know what's on other people's minds?' Now men do that, too. Men can do the same thing, too, but women just happen to be that way a little more than men, not to put women down or whatever. And she said, 'Yes.' And we just looked at each other and laughed and said, 'Well, let's just be what we are.'

I see her quite often when I go into that bank and joke about it a little bit. Men tend, on the other hand, to put women down and put them in their places and call them stupid and all this sort of thing. Then they do something exactly that their wives or some woman told them that they shouldn't be doing and then it is, 'I told you so. So, it comes both ways.

Now, if you have preference then, v 4: "Then have you not passed judgment among yourselves, and have made yourselves judges *with evil opinions*?" Isn't that true? *Yes, it is true!*

I heard of a terrible case, some white kids against some black kids back in New York. Four white kids chased down two black kids, a boy and a girl, cut off their hair, painted them with white

shoe polish, robbed them, took their money, all of \$3, beat them up, let them go and said, after they painted them with the white shoe polish, 'You'll be white one day.'

Evil runs with everyone: white, black, yellow, brown, tall, short, skinny, fat, male, female. When we come across these things and make blanket statements or things in our mind such as, 'This rich person must be good; they have money. This poor person must be bad, after all they are suffering.'

How do you know? Don't we do that with people in our own minds? Whenever you're stuck in traffic and the other person doesn't move like they should, don't you make an evil judgment in your mind concerning that person? *Sure you do!* I have. That's why James cuts to the quick because it's day-to-day Christian living and the things we ought to do and ought not do. "...made yourselves judges *with evil opinions*."

John 7:11—here they were judging Jesus: "As a result, the Jews were seeking Him at the Feast, and said, 'Where is He?' Now there was much debating about Him among the people. Some said, 'He is a good Man.' But others said, 'No, but He is deceiving the people.'.... [judging with evil opinions] However, no one spoke publicly about Him for fear of the Jews.... [that is the Jewish leaders] ...But then, about the middle of the Feast, Jesus went up into the temple and was teaching. And the Jews were amazed, saying, 'How does this Man know letters...'" (vs 11-15). In other words, understand the Scriptures.

He didn't have a traditional rabbinic Jewish education. I will take anyone on and argue that He did not have that kind of education, because they said, 'How did He know letters?' It was well known that He didn't study at any of the rabbinic schools. Yet, He knew more than they did. Remember when He was twelve, went up to the temple, was asking questions and talking to the priest and everything?

"...having never been schooled?" Jesus answered them and said, 'My doctrine is not Mine, but His Who sent Me. If anyone desires to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it is from God, or *whether* I speak from My own self. The one who speaks of himself is seeking his own glory...' (vs 15-18). So, there's even this own glory, vanity kind of thing that human beings have. We've seen that, too.

"...but He Who seeks the glory of Him [God the Father] Who sent Him is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. Did not Moses give you the Law, and not one of you is practicing the Law?

Why do you seek to kill Me?’ The people answered and said, ‘You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?’” (vs 18-20).

All of this judging going on! And what were they doing? *Judging! Making evil discernment!* We’ll read some of the Law of Moses here in just a little bit.

Verse 21: “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘I did one work, and you were all amazed. Now then, Moses gave you circumcision—not that it was from Moses, but from the fathers—and on *the Sabbath* you circumcise a man. If a man receives circumcision on *the Sabbath*, so that the Law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with Me...”” (vs 21-23). ***The anger of man does not fulfill the righteousness of God!*** It’s just leaps off the page!

“...because I made a man entirely whole on *the Sabbath*? Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (vs 21-24).

That’s the whole thing. In any judging it has to be righteous judging. Don’t make yourself a judge with evil opinions {note ‘judge not lest you be judged’ and you’ve got a plank in your eye and you’re trying to get a splinter out of your brother’s eye (Matt. 7)} ***We’re to judge righteous judgment!*** Who is the righteous Judge? ***Jesus is!***

Let me give you these following Scriptures that you can write in your margin or your notes and go back and study concerning judgment:

- 2-Tim. 4:1, 8—righteous judge who is God
- Isa. 11:3—that it’s prophesied of Jesus that He wouldn’t judge after the seeing of His eyes, not appearance
- Why?
- How do we come before God?  
*So much for religious attire!*
- Does He not know all the thoughts of any human being He ever wants to know at any time? *Yes!*

This tells us how we come before God, Hebrews 4:12: “For the Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, and of both *the joints* and *the marrow*, and *is* able to ***discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.***”

- not what you wear
- not what you don’t wear
- not how rich you are
- not how poor you are
- not how much money you give
- not how much money you don’t give

—not any of those things. But “...***the thoughts and intents of the heart.***” That’s why we have, as people, the proclivity to have evil opinions about people.

Here’s how we come before God, v 13: And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight; but ***all things are naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him*** to Whom we must give account.

This is not saying, brethren, that we aren’t to dress as decently as we can when we have the opportunity, but this doesn’t mean not to put any stock in it. That’s why it says, when you look into the *perfect law of liberty*, that spiritual mirror, don’t forget what human nature is like.

Hebrews 12:22: “But you have come to Mount Zion... [that is in heaven above when you pray unto God] ... and to *the city of the living God*, heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels; *to the joyous festival gathering*; and to ***the Church of the Firstborn...***” (vs 22-23). That ties right in with James 1:18, *the firstfruits of all His created beings.*

“...registered in the *Book of Life* in heaven; and to God, ***the Judge of all...*** [everyone!] ...and to *the spirits of the just* who have been perfected; and to Jesus, *the Mediator of the New Covenant*; and to sprinkling of *the blood of ratification*, proclaiming superior things than *that of Abel*” (vs 23-24).

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order—A Faithful Version*

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) John 3:16
- 2) James 1:17-18
- 3) John 16:26-27
- 4) James 1:17-18
- 5) John 16:27
- 6) Ephesians 1:4-9
- 7) James 1:18-22, 13, 21-26
- 8) 1 Corinthians 10:12
- 9) Romans 2:29, 17-24
- 10) James 1:26
- 11) Matthew 6:1-5, 16-18
- 12) Matthew 24:42-51
- 13) James 1:27
- 14) James 2:1-4, 1
- 15) Acts 10:25-28, 34-38, 47-48
- 16) Acts 11:1-3, 15-19
- 17) James 2:2-4
- 18) John 7:11-24
- 19) Hebrews 4:12-13
- 20) Hebrews 12:22-24



Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- James 3
- Ezekiel 33
- Matthew 23
- Revelation 17; 18
- Galatians 2
- Acts 13-15
- Matthew 7
- 2 Timothy 4:1, 8
- Isaiah 11:3

Also referenced:

Books:

- *The Lies We Believe* by Chris Thurman
- *A Harmony of The Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter

Sermon Series: *Satan's Ten Most Believable Lies*

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## Epistle of James IV Profession of Faith without Works is Dead!

Fred R. Coulter

James 2:5: “My beloved brethren...” All the way through, whenever James talks to the people in the Church, he calls them *brethren; my beloved*, in this case.

“...listen. Did not God Himself... [middle-voice verb] ...choose the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which He has promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor *man*.... [by saying, ‘come and be under my footstool.’] ...Do not the rich oppress you, and do they *not* drag you into *the* courts? Do they not blaspheme the worthy name by which you are called? If you are truly keeping *the* Royal Law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing well” (vs 5-8).

That’s the whole theme of this epistle; love your neighbor as yourself, take care of your life in doing the things you need to do based upon faith.

Verse 9: “But if you have respect of persons, you are practicing sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors; for *if* anyone keeps the whole law, but sins in one *aspect*, he becomes guilty of all. For He Who said, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘You shall not commit murder.’ Now, if you do not commit adultery, but you commit murder, you have become a transgressor of *the* Law. In this manner speak and in this manner behave... [as compared to breaking the law] ...as those who are about to be judged by *the* law of freedom. For the one who has dealt without mercy *will be* judged without mercy. But mercy triumphs over judgment” (vs 9-13).

Verse 5: “...Did not God Himself choose the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which He has promised to those who love Him?”

Again, I want to emphasize that, especially in the general epistles, and especially in the Epistles of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, & 3<sup>rd</sup>-John, this aspect of the present tense, *loving Him*. Now that is a present tense participle: *who are loving Him!*

Verse 6: “But you have dishonored the poor *man*....” Why? *Because you do not accept him as someone that has been called of God*, the greatest thing in the world that could happen to someone.

“...Do not the rich oppress you, and do they *not* drag you into *the* courts?” (v 6).

Let’s stop here and add a little bit something concerning the Jewish synagogue. They had courts in the synagogues. Remember the Apostle Paul got

orders from the high priest and went to the synagogues to get any of them who were of that way, who were Christians. So, we have even in the synagogues that were Christian, we still had those who were non-believers.

Remember, as I pointed out in the first section of this that it says here in v 2 ‘synagogue,’ but back in James 5, it says, ‘If any is sick, let him call for the elders of the Church.’ So the Church was a secondary thing within the synagogue. What he’s actually talking about here, are not only brethren, but also those they come in contact *within* the synagogues. Remember that James was honored and accepted by a lot of the Jewish leaders of Judaism, because of his righteousness. What was happening here, they were dragging the poor ones into court, the synagogue court, and of course, you’re going to have as it were a ‘stacked’ court.

Verse 7: “Do they not blaspheme the worthy name by which you are called?” That means *denying Christ!* This was an *inner synagogue problem* that was taking place. Who are the ones who would be blaspheming but the rich Sadducees, the rich Pharisees, the ones who rejected Christ, but would still come to the synagogues?

And I’ll just call your attention to the fact that wherever the Apostle Paul went and preached in the synagogues it ended up sooner or later in a riot. They split the synagogue and in some cases, as in Corinth they went and met in the house right next to the synagogue. It was the house of the leading rabbi, who had a house right next to the synagogue. They would meet there on the Sabbath and the Jews who didn’t believe would meet in the synagogue on the Sabbath. Now, you talk about dividing the line. That is really it!

So, here you had this interplay within the synagogues, v 7: “Do they not blaspheme the worthy name by which you are called?.... [*actually* or *realistically*] ...If you are truly keeping... [Present tense active verb] ...*the* Royal Law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing well” (vs 7-8). You’re not looking down on people, you’re not pressing people, you’re not talking about them, etc.

Verse 9: “But if you have respect of persons, you are **practicing sin**...” That is *doing, missing the mark*. I could have translated it: *you are missing the mark*.

But then the next phrase: “...being

convicted by the law as transgressors” (v 9)—‘hamartia’—which means a *sinner*, a *transgressor*. So what he is talking about here is the **severity of the law that Christians experience when they see themselves sinning**. To them it becomes a **greater** thing because they understand the love of God, whereas just people in the world and their carnal ordinary way wouldn’t mean that much to them.

“...being convicted by the law as transgressors... [and then I retained the word *sin* instead of *missing the mark* because]: ...for if anyone keeps the whole law, but sins in one *aspect*, he becomes guilty of all” (vs 9-10).

Let’s look at some of the laws that relate to this. First of all, 1-John 3:4: “Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness.”

Now, let’s understand something here concerning the rich man and Jesus (Matt. 19). Here is a perfect case of a test to respect a rich man or not. The rich man came and said to Him, ‘Good Master, what good thing should I do to have eternal life?’ What was the first thing that Jesus said? ‘*Do not call Me good. There is none good but one, and that is God!*’ He wasn’t allowing Himself to be ingratiated by the rich man, was not respecting persons.

Jesus said, ‘*If you will enter into life, keep the commandments.*’ And the rich man said, ‘Which?’ So, He named off the commandments and all of those who were super sharp say, ‘Well, He didn’t mention the Sabbath, so therefore, we don’t have to keep the Sabbath.’ That’s not the question. So then, after Jesus said, ‘Honor your father and mother, shall not commit adultery, shall not steal, shall not do murder’; the young man said, ‘*I have done these from my youth up.*’ Jesus said, ‘You lack one thing, yet.’ Why did He say that? **Because He knew the young man was trusting in his riches, his status, his importance!** Jesus said, ‘Go sell everything that you have and come and follow Me and you shall have riches in heaven.’

You need to think on that in relationship to this chapter, because this is where the Apostle James is making the differentiation between the rich and the poor, because the rich want to come in and always leverage their position somehow and their wealth and their riches. And Jesus made it absolutely clear that doesn’t ‘cut any mustard’ with God, because after all, ***you have nothing that God didn’t give you in the first place!*** So, if you sell it and give it all to the poor, in reality you haven’t lost anything, because you have found eternal life. For those of us who want more, look at the prospect of having someone like that give up all that they have. We end up with the same conclusion that the disciples did, which was, ‘Lord’—after the rich man walked

away—‘how is it that anybody is going to be saved?’ What did Jesus say? ‘*How scarcely, how difficult, how severe it’s going to be for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God,*’ because they themselves were looking at it from just a physical point of view. And yet, what happens? *That same thing happens!*

Lev. 19—James is quoting that section of the Bible in reference to ‘loving your neighbor as yourself.’ We will see that there are many aspects that we’ve covered in the previous verses, such as judging; such as not bridling your tongue; and not bridling your tongue becomes a very important thing.

I think that’s one of the biggest and most difficult problems within the Churches of God, especially those that are involved in character assassination, because someone leaves them.

I talked to a man last night who said that he talked to an elder who is in their Church and the elder said that the elder says that he ‘knows’ Fred Coulter; he’s involved in palm reading. I said to that individual, I said, ‘You tell him he owes me a phone call and if I don’t get one in two weeks, I going to call him,’ because I never have been involved in palm reading at all. He’s not controlling his tongue—is he? And his religion is vain—isn’t it? *Yes, it is!* If he won’t come and confront the person directly... What does Matt. 18 say? *If you have a fault against your brother, you go to him between you alone and get it resolved.* If that doesn’t work, take one or two more. If that doesn’t work, then tell it to the Church. But don’t carry the thing on and let your **uncontrollable tongue plow** through the universe.

We find all of that here in Leviticus 19:13. “You shall not defraud your neighbor nor rob *him*. The wages of him who is hired shall not stay with you all night until the morning. You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God. I *am* the LORD. **You shall do no unrighteousness in judgment....** [see how this follows right along with what James is writing] **...you shall not respect the person of the poor...** [you are not to respect persons, rich or poor] **...nor honor the person of the mighty...** [or the wealthy; that’s exactly what we’re talking about in James 2] **...but you shall judge your neighbor in righteousness. You shall not go as a slanderer among your people...**” (vs 13-16).

‘Whosoever does not bridle his tongue that man’s religion is in vain.’ It is absolutely amazing how that just leaps off the page.

**“...you shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor. I am the LORD” (v 16). To have**

*him convicted of something worthy of death for which he is not worthy!*

Just like this law that they have, and now they arrested this man in San Jose, the grandfather. It wasn't even his gun. He wasn't even home. He didn't even know where it was, but they have a law, child-endangerment law, that if a child gets a gun and has an accident that you are liable, and the sentence is three years in jail. *No law was ever designed anywhere to prevent accidents!*

It says, 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Don't stand against the blood of your neighbor. That's exactly what's happening here. Don't you think the grandfather is already broken up enough? Don't you think the family has already suffered enough? *Oh yes, but the district attorney says, 'If I couldn't get a conviction, I wouldn't do it.'* I looked at that district attorney and I thought, because I just studied this one here where it says *mercy triumphs over judgment*. Just like in our little town of Hollister. I tell you that district attorney is out to make himself a name, trampling over everybody's rights to get as many convictions as he can, so he can make himself politically a 'wonderful' man, tough on law and order.

Verse 17: "You shall not hate your brother in your heart...." Same with James, you're judging people and you have evil opinions. That's why James is so fantastic. *It is day-to-day living, comparing our motives and actions with loving our neighbors as our self and with the proper expression of our faith!*

Brethren, just as you, I find myself falling way short of those things. I have to confess before God, I do. So don't feel bad if you do. This is typical of all Christians. That's why it is there, because *we cannot have any perfection without Christ!* Don't feel bad if you look at this and you find that you are imperfect. That's what the mirror of looking into the law is all about; you see how imperfect you are.

Verse 17: "You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall always admonish your neighbor, that you may not bear sin because of him. You shall not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people..." (vs 17-18). The anger of man does not equal the righteousness of God.

"...but you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD" (v 18). There we go; *the whole theme of the book of James*, right there. You could go through and study other sections in the Old Testament and see how it just absolutely fits it to a 'T.'

Does this mean you have the power to forgive or do you have to ask God to help you forgive? *I would say, both!* You have the power to

forgive, but there are times when you have to ask God to help you forgive.

Let's look at it this way: When some little thing is not done at home, especially when your children don't do it—and I'm speaking of myself—it's so simple and you see that they haven't done it, you get all upset and you really crush down on them. But they go out and smash up the car and you're worried if they are alive? Smashing up the car was worse, but in that event you see the magnitude of it and you're more concerned about their life, and they are all worried about the car, because they know that they got *blue-blazes* last time that they did this little ole thing over here and **look at this car**. You'll have it happen to you, it happened to me.

I would say in both cases; in the small instance you have to ask God to give you the power to forgive because it's more, you dump more on them for the little thing than for the big thing. You are more willing to forgive the big thing because they're alive and well and you love them, but the little thing they are supposed to understand that. 'So why didn't you do that?' It could be anything:

- turn out the light
- shut the refrigerator door
- don't leave the heat on at night
- pick up your room
- make it clean

—whatever it may be, a thousand and one different things—

- How many times have I told you to put your dirty clothes in the dirty clothes hamper and not on the floor?
- if you want these things washed, you go wash them yourself
- I'm not your maid
- What's for dinner?
- we just got done eating
- Don't you want to eat when we're ready?

All of those things, in those things you need to ask God to help you to be able to forgive; I do. In the bigger things it comes more easily, because the magnitude that they are living is more important.

James 2:10: "for *if* anyone keeps the whole law, but sins in one *aspect*, he becomes guilty of all." Why? *Because sin is sin!* A person who says, 'I haven't committed adultery,' but then you are a murderer; are you any better than an adulterer? Or whatever and you can take any category you wanted to and go right down the line with it. But if you commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the Law. Now, *because* of all of these things

Verse 12: "In this manner speak and in this manner behave... [How we are to speak? How we are to behave?]: ... as those who are about to be

judged by *the* law of freedom.” So that we have our conduct above reproach so we’re not in there sinning right and left all the time. He’s saying *that’s the perfect goal*. We may fall short of it, but we still get up and we go on.

Verse 13: “For the one who has dealt without mercy *will be* judged without mercy. **But mercy triumphs over judgment.**” James is talking specifically about the attitude of judging; *judge not lest you be judged*. And many times when we say things—we say things and there is **no mercy**. I don’t have to elaborate. You know, I know. You’ve done it, I’ve done it.

Example, Matthew 18:21: “Then Peter came to Him *and* said, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?... [show mercy and forgiveness] ...Until seven times?’” That seems humanly, a nice thing. You’re going to be generous, seven times.

Verse 22: “Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven.’”

If you consider that on a daily basis that’s 490 times a day, and how many times do we not forgive even seven times in one day and run off all cross-eyed and smoking ears and snorting nostrils, running down in anger, venting our own little wrath. I’ve described myself as well as anyone else. That’s the way it is—but **70 times 7**—now there’s a great lesson for us here.

How many times does God have to forgive us? The whole lesson is we want mercy for ourselves from God, but:

- Are we willing to give that same kind of thing to someone else? *Very difficult, especially when they take advantage of it!*
- Have you ever had your mercy taken advantage of? *Yes!*
- How do you feel? *Miserable!*

You wished you had never given mercy.

Now let’s look at it from God’s perspective. **How many times has God been merciful and held back the hand of wrath and anger, even against the wicked who deserve it?**

Let’s look at the other side of the coin of Sodom and Gomorrah and the episode there in Genesis 18 & 19. He was willing to forego that judgment of destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah if there were just ten people who were righteous. He would be merciful. So, mercy would triumph over judgment in that case, but there weren’t even ten! And of the four that left, one of them didn’t make it. Lot and his wife and his two daughters and his wife didn’t make it. An example of judgment, not even

any room for mercy, *God was willing to give the mercy.*

So he gives an example for us in our behavior, v 23: “Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man, a *certain* king, who would take account with his servants. And after he began to reckon, there was brought to him one debtor who owed *him* ten thousand talents” (vs 23-24). Let’s just use the figure I have here—\$9.25-million. It’s worth about three times that now, so just say \$30-million. He owed someone \$30-million.

Verse 25: But since he did not have *anything* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. Because of this, the servant fell down *and* worshiped him, saying, ‘Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ And being moved with compassion, the lord of that servant released him, **and forgave him the debt.**” (vs 25-27).

That’s a whale of a big debt—isn’t it? I think of all my debts I have, if I could just have all of them just forgiven, I would be happy. Yes, that would be nice.

This is what happens too many times. We get mercy from God. We want mercy from God, but what do we do? *We turn around and we don’t give it to other people!*

Verse 28: “Then that servant went out *and* found one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred silver coins... [a sniveling little \$9.25] ...and after seizing him, he choked *him*...” Sounds like some of these collection agencies. If you ever get any bills in collection you will know what I mean.

“...saying ‘Pay me what you owe.’ As a result, his fellow servant fell down at his feet and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ But he would not *listen*; instead, he went and cast him into prison, until he should pay the amount that he owed. Now, when his fellow servants saw the things *that* had taken place, they were greatly distressed; and they went to their lord *and* related all that had taken place. Then his lord called him *and* said to him, ‘*You* wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you implored me. Were you not also obligated to have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?’ And in anger, his lord delivered him up to the tormentors, until he should pay all that he owed to him. **Likewise shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother’s offenses from the heart**” (vs 28-35).

It has to be from the heart and the heart is

that part of the mind which is the thing that *you* have to control and *you* have to use *your will to submit to the will of God*. So, it has to be from your heart, not just to do it. ‘Well, I’ll do it because I have to or the law says so’ or ‘Well, I’ll do it, because, well I’ve had mercy so I better do it.’ You better say, ‘God, you’ve been merciful to me, help me to be merciful here.’ That’s how *mercy has triumphed over judgment*.

I’m amazed just going through here how much comes out of the book of Matthew:

- Matthew 5:7: “Blessed *are* the merciful, for they shall find mercy.”
- Matthew 6:14-15—I’ll let you study that

What we are doing here with the book of James and which we will do with 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> -Peter and the Epistles of John and Jude is that this is meant to be a vehicle for further and deeper study for yourself.

James 2:14: “My brethren, what good *does* it do, if anyone says *that he* has faith, and does not have works? **Is faith able to save him?**” Now this presents a great controversy when it’s misunderstood with the Epistles of Paul, but believe me, there is no controversy between James and Paul. *None whatsoever!*

Verse 15: “Now then, if there be a brother or sister who is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; be warmed and be filled,’ and does not give to them the things necessary for the body, what good is it? In the same way also, faith, if it does not have works, is dead, by itself. But someone is going to say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ *My answer is:* You prove your faith to me through your works, and I will prove my faith to you through my works. Do you believe that God is one?.... [not that there is one God, but that God *is* one] ... You do well *to believe this*. Even the demons believe and tremble *in fear*. But are you willing to understand, O foolish man, **that faith without works is dead?**” (vs 15-20).

Verse 21: “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac, his own son, upon the altar? Do you not see that faith was working together with his works, and by works *his* faith was perfected? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Now, Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness’; and he was called a friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Now, in the same manner also, was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when, after receiving the messengers, she sent *them* out a different way? For as the body without *the* spirit is dead, in the same way also, faith

without works is dead” (vs 21-26). Is there a conflict? *No!*

Let’s go back to v 14, let’s pick it up here and we will go through each one of these verses so that we can understand it.

- there is faith, which is profession, without works
- there is also works without faith

I think you are going to find this very interesting and very helpful and that there is no conflict at all whatsoever between James and Paul.

Verse 14: “My brethren, what good *does* it do, if anyone says *that he* has faith...” This is *a profession*, an *expression of faith*, if you are saying that you have faith.

- How do you prove faith?
- Can you measure it?
- Can you calculate it?
- How do you prove faith?
- How do you know you have faith?

You can say, ‘I love the Lord. I believe the Bible.’ Now, we’re getting down to *profession of faith*:

- *I believe the Bible*

Do you want to come to Church on Sabbath? *Oh, no!*

- *I believe in doing what God says.*

Do you want to tithe?

- *No, no, we don’t need to do that!*
- *I believe that Jesus is our Savior.*

Do you want to keep His commandments?

- *No! He delivered us from the commandments.*

***A profession of faith without works is dead!***

- What kind of works are we talking about here?
- Works of law as it was in Judaism?

***or***

- Are we talking about works of faith?
- *We’re talking about works of faith!*

I’ll show you. We have in Matt. 7 contrasted the two faiths: The *professing* faith and the *working* faith. That’s what it’s talking about, because if you believe the Sabbath *is the Sabbath of God*—the fourth commandment—you will *keep the Sabbath! A work of faith because you believe!*

Matthew 7:21: “Not everyone who says to Me ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven...” Because that is *a profession: praise the Lord, bless the Lord*. Praise the Lord and pass the pork and get parasites of the brain. I’m being a little facetious here, but some people do that.

I had the occasion the other day that someone gave me something that had some pork in

it. I worked around it and took it all out and ate a little bit of the bread around the outside of it and didn't eat any more of that and said nothing. I'm not going to eat it. Since it was a business associate somewhere out there I didn't raise the point to cause a problem.

Verse 21: "Not everyone who says to Me 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; **but the one who is doing the will of My Father, Who is in heaven.**" There is the *work of faith*. If you believe God, you will do what He says. That's the kind of works it's talking about here. These are *works of faith* to *perfect the faith*.

Let's see how the words get them, v 22: "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?' And then I will confess to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness.'" (vs 21-23). Your *faith profession* of that faith is not resulting in concrete actions that result from that faith.

Another example, v 24: "Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and practices them..." *Works acting upon the faith*, having nothing to do with a work of law to justify you whatsoever, because Judaism's *work of law* is this: **You do it to force God to do something for you!**

Someone sent me something from Rabbi Schneerson, the near messiah of the Orthodox Jews today. He said that 'We are almost ready for the Messiah to come. As a matter of fact, there are two Messiahs: Messiah Ben Joseph, who's going to come and die for the sins of the people, and Messiah Ben David, who's going to set up the kingdom, but we have some more good works to do before God will do it for us.'

***That is a work of law to compel God to do something for you because you did it!*** That is a *work of law*. We're talking about here are *works of faith* based upon ***what God has said for you to do***, not a work of law which you are telling God what He's going to do, because you have done it. And those who do so are called workers of iniquity.

Verse 24: "Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and practices them, I will compare him to a wise man, who built... [actions, work, because he believed, acted upon that belief] ...his house upon **the rock**.... [the Rock is Christ (1-Cor. 10)] ...and the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; but it did not fall, for it was founded upon the rock" (vs 24-25).

A very good example of your house of faith that is founded on the Rock Who is Jesus Christ, and which the trials and troubles of wind and rain and storm and all these destructive forces come upon you.

(go to the next track)

Here's the one who has a *profession of faith*, but *no works* of faith, v 26: "And everyone who hears these words of Mine and **does not practice them**..." He's a *hearer* of the law, but *not a doer*! Didn't we just cover that in James? *Yes!*

"...shall be compared to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand; and the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it" (vs 26-27).

This time of year we see a lot of those. On the east coast they've had these waves come in and just wipe out these houses—built right on the sand—right out on the sea coast, even on the pillars raised up 15 feet above the sand. These waves came in and just so much kindling wood. It's gone! Didn't believe!

Or like these people down in Texas, they were told many times, 'Don't build your houses on the Trinity River, below the 100-year-flood-level; you're going to get flooded.' So what do they do? *They build their houses by the river below the 100-year-flood-level!* Guess what? *They got flooded!* And then what do they do to put a guilt trip on all of the rest of us? *They run a picture of a nice little grandma, who just got her house fixed from the flood before* and just had brand new carpet put down and just had all of these things put down and guess what? *It's flooded again* and she says, 'I've been wiped out, I have nothing.' And you look at that and you feel guilty. You know the press and TV do that to make you feel guilty.

The Bible says it was ***foolish!*** We shouldn't feel guilty. Now, if we are in a situation to help her temporarily, we should. But my first advice would be, 'Ma'am, don't build your house down there below the flood-level.' What good did it do to fix up the house and put in new carpets? *No good!* Likewise, what good does it do to have a profession of faith, but you have nothing of substance behind it? There's another saying, too, which is: ***If your religion costs you nothing, there is no faith involved!*** Think on that one for a while. ***If your religion costs you nothing, there's no faith involved!*** Let's see how this goes further.

James 2:14: "My brethren, what good *does* it do, if anyone says... [the profession] ...*that he* has faith, and does not have works?... [works that back up that faith] ...Is faith... [or is that *profession*]

...able to save him?" *No!* Jesus said it was not. No conflict whatsoever.

These are *works based upon faith*. The others are *professions of faith with no works*. That's why he uses this example:

Verse 15: "Now then, if there be a brother or sister who is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; be warmed and be filled,' and does not give to them the things necessary for the body, what good is it?" (vs 14-16). *No good!*

If that is the case, then you are doing just exactly like the Pharisees. They said, but didn't do. Isn't that what the Pharisees said? What did Jesus say? '*Do what they say.*' That is when reading the Scriptures, '*but don't do what they do, for they say and do not.*'

This is the controversy of tradition, Mark 7:3: "For the Pharisees and all the Jews, holding fast to the tradition of the elders, do not eat unless they wash their hands thoroughly. Even *when coming* from the market, they do not eat unless they *first* wash themselves. And there are many other things that they have received to observe, *such as the* washing of cups and pots and brass utensils and tables. For this reason, the Pharisees and the scribes questioned Him, *saying*, 'Why don't Your disciples walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?' And He answered *and* said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it is written, "**This people honors Me with their lips... [mouthing profession, mouthing faith] ...but their hearts are far away from Me**"' (vs 3-6).

That's what God wants; He wants the heart. ***That is the thing that has to be converted!*** That part of your mind, which the Bible calls *the heart, the will*, that thing that is the unconquerable thing of you and of me, which only the Holy Spirit of God can convict to change, so that we can have the courage and the choice to change.

Verse 6: "...their hearts are far away from Me.... [and if it is far from God]: ...But in vain do they worship Me, teaching *for* doctrine the commandments of men" (vs 6-7). ***Profession of faith without the works of faith!***

They had the works of their own dos and don'ts, which they did exercising no faith, but to have faith and then the works that back it up. Do you see the difference there?

There are a lot of people who are afraid to read Rom. 4, because they don't understand Rom. 4 and they don't understand Abraham. You don't have to be afraid. We'll read it; we'll study it.

Here's another example of loving your neighbor as yourself, Luke 10:25: "Now a certain doctor of the law suddenly stood up... [we're going to get tricked here] ...And He said to him, 'What is written in the law? How do you read *it*?' Then he answered *and* said, 'You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.' And He said to him, 'You have answered correctly. **Do this, and you shall live**'" (vs 25-28). You have the faith in what is said to have the works to do what is said.

Here's the difference between *profession and doing*, v 29: "But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'.... [sounds just like a lawyer] ...And taking *it* up, Jesus said, 'A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and was encircled by thieves; *and* after they had stripped him *of his goods* and inflicted *him with* wounds, they went away, leaving *him* half dead. Now, by coincidence, a certain priest went down that road..." (vs 29-31).

- representing God
  - the one who offered the sacrifices daily
  - the one who praised God
  - the one who read the Psalms
  - the one who offered the incense
  - the one who put the blood on the altar
- if it were the high priest*
- the one who went into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement; he's righteous.

"...and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side" (v 31). Why? *Because he didn't want to get contaminated with the blood of the wounded man!* That's judgment without mercy! All these things become vivid in living.

Verse 32: "And in like manner also, a Levite... [the helper at the temple] ...when he was at the place, came and saw *him*, and passed by on the opposite side. But a certain Samaritan..." (vs 29-33). Hated by the Jews, terrible, rotten, evil Samaritans, and their hatred for them is just bitter to this very day; as bitter as it is toward the Palestinians if you want a modern day example.

If you went up to Yitzhak Shamir and said, 'You ought to go out and tend to the wounded Palestinians over here on the West Bank.' You would be vituperated with hate, evil and wretchedness, same thing. That's how they feel toward the Samaritans.

"...as he was journeying, came to him; and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion. And he went to *him* and bound up his wounds..." (vs 33-34).



He's talking to a Jewish lawyer—really get this in mind—*who hate the Samaritans with a passion!* I can't overstate it. That's why Jesus used this. So, here's this Samaritan.

Verse 34: "And he went *to him* and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil... [olive oil] ...and wine..." By the way that's very good for wounds, too, very good, especially burgundy wine.

I'll tell you an example of a man up in Oregon years ago. He was working on his truck carburetor. You know how you do these trucks, you stand, you lean right in them. And he was trying to get it going and the carburetor blew up in his face and blew gas on his face and burned it. Now what normally happens if you go to the hospital? *They run you in the hospital and they strip off all the skin.* Worst thing in the world to do! Worst thing! Now they strip it off so you won't get infection, but if you handle it with the wine and the oil. In this case, what they did, they took olive oil—and he was in the Church and was anointed for it—and in the process of his healing, there was a point that he just looked so ugly because the old burned skin was just falling and hanging down and they had to clip it off as it was coming down.

But he healed without a scar one! I personally saw the man. What did they do? *They put olive oil and vitamin E, ran it down—just soaked his head with it.* Then they took gallons and gallons—through the whole thing—of burgundy wine. After the oil would be there for a while, they would pour on the burgundy wine; just let it run down, no bandages, nothing that would contaminate. And they did this 24 hours a day, every two hours for ten days. And *he was completely healed!* That is really something! So, if you get a burn, remember that: *olive oil and wine*, just like this here.

"...then he put him on his own beast *and* brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And when he left on the next day ... [in the morning when he left] ...he took out two silver coins *and* gave *them* to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him, and whatever you may expend above *this*, I will repay you when I come back'" (vs 34-35).

No credit card, no credit check, no signature, nothing like that, he just said, 'I'll be back to take care of it.' Which is saying:

- the Samaritan has more compassion
- the Samaritan is more honest
- the Samaritan, whom you hate, before God stands better than you

***That is a powerful lesson!***

Verse 36: "'Therefore, which of these three seems to you to have been a neighbor of him who fell among the thieves?' And he said... [What could the lawyer say?] ...'The one who showed compassion toward him.' Then Jesus said to him, 'You go and do likewise'" (vs 36-37). In like manner: that's what likewise means. ***Works of faith***, that's what it's talking about.

James 2:17: "In the same way also, faith, if it does not have works, is dead, by itself." Or that is, *being alone. A profession of faith without works of faith is dead, being alone!* It's like the proverbial whoremonger who says, 'Honey, forgive me. I'll never do it again,' every week. It's like the one who's the alcoholic and says, 'I'll never touch another drop,' till I have my next drink. ***Profession without works!***

Now then, you're going to get into a debate on that, v 18: "But someone is going to say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' *My answer is:* You prove your faith to me through your works... [separate and apart from works] ...and ***I will prove my faith to you through my works....*** [works that are *motivated by faith*, because you believe] ...Do you believe that God is one? You do well *to believe this....* [that's fine] ...Even the demons believe—and tremble *in fear*" (vs 18-19).

Did you know there is such a thing as *the faith of demons*, that they believe that God exists. You hear some of these people that everyone looks at awe at them when they say, 'I believe that God created the universe.' Well, so do the demons! They haven't done anything.

- Does your belief carry you to obey God?
- Does your belief carry you into doing other things?
- Is that what it is?

There is this lawyer over in Berkeley; he's been on different talk shows. He can prove by legal things that there was not evolution. Legally and philosophically there had to be a Creator, but he doesn't put it in religious terms to obey God. ***'Faith without works is dead.'*** It is a demonic faith. They believe and they're trembling in fear, yet, these people who profess it are not trembling in fear. Oh no, they are arrogant. That's why he says:

Verse 20: But are you willing to understand, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

Verse 21 talks about Abraham, who is called the *father of the faithful!* Abraham, you could call the best. Rahab you could call, being a harlot, the worst. He's using both ends of the scale here. What did Jesus say to those Jews who said, 'We have Abraham for our father and never been in bondage

to anyone.' What did Jesus answer? *If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.* Because you are descended from someone does not guarantee anything. That's why I use Abraham.

Verse 21: "Was not Abraham our father... [Jesus calls Abraham our father, too.] ...justified by works when he offered up Isaac, his own son, upon the altar? Do you not see that faith was working together with his works, and **by works his faith was perfected?**" (vs 21-22). He *acted upon that faith*.

Rom. 4—it looks like there is a great and a vast contradiction between James and Paul, but *there is not!* We will show you that James is talking about one instance, and Paul is talking about another instance. There are times when you must act. There are other times when you must believe.

The one in James 2 is talking about where Abraham had to act upon that faith because there was something to do. The other one, there was nothing he could do but believe. So, Paul is using one instance in believing God; that His promises are true. And in believing God—that His promises are true—God is going to act upon those promises, and you believe that; that is counted to you for righteousness.

When God says, 'Remember the Sabbath to keep it Holy,' that requires your faith and belief in that commandment, the action to follow through and to do it. The instance here that we're talking about with Paul and Abraham is when God told Abraham, 'Come out here and look at the stars. If you can number all of those, that's what your seed is going to be.' What could Abraham do? Start counting? *No!* That required **no action**; that **required belief**. When later He said, 'Take your only son and go offer a sacrifice,' that required action based upon believing God. So, there's no contradiction whatsoever.

Romans 4:1: "What then shall we say *that* our father Abraham has found with respect to *the* flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has a basis for boasting..." (vs 1-2).

In other words, if Abraham went out and did something and said, 'Lord, look what I did. **You must give me this.**' God isn't going to be inclined to do it. Why? Who can do a great thing for God? What did God say? 'Where is the house that you will build unto Me, for all these things My hand has made?' This is talking about something that you would do which would **compel God** to do something for you. That's what it's talking about.

"...he has a basis for boasting, but not before God..." (v 2)—because God is greater than a man and there's nothing that Abraham did that forced God to do anything.

Verse 3: "For what does the Scripture say? 'And Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.' Now, to the one who works, the reward is not reckoned according to grace; rather, *it is reckoned as a debt*" (vs 3-4).

In other words, *the whole process of doing something where you indebt God to you!* It won't happen! Whatever God does is because of *grace*. In giving that grace and forgiving your sins, He says, 'Do this...' then you have works that perfects the faith. But you can't have works to substitute and create faith. Then you indebt God to you and *God is indebted to no man*.

Verse 5: "But to the one who does not work..." Is not looking to his own works of law, not looking to the traditions, not looking to the dos and don'ts of men, is not working that kind of work.

"...but believes in Him Who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness; even as David also declares the blessedness of the man **to whom God imputes righteousness separate from works**" (vs 5-6).

Now let's take the instance again of David and Bathsheba. What if David came to himself and said, 'Ok, I know that I've done all of these things, therefore, now I'm going to do thus and such to undo it.' What could he do to restore Uriah the Hittite to life? *Nothing!* To restore the dead baby to life? *Nothing!* So, you can't go out and do something to force God to wipe away your sin. What is it that you must do? **Repent and believe!** That's what you must do. **Repent and believe!** That's what he's talking about here. Then with that belief you have *works of faith* based upon that later.

Verse 7: "'Blessed are *those* whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is the* man to whom *the* Lord will not impute ... [or calculate] ...*any* sin.' Now then, *does* this blessedness *come* upon the circumcision *only*... [Does it come because of a physical act of circumcision? *No, because it's of the heart!*] ...or also upon the uncircumcision?... [comes upon both] ...For we are saying that faith was imputed to Abraham for righteousness. In what condition, therefore was it imputed? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision?... [Now **this galls every Jew!**] ...Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And *afterwards* he received *the* sign of circumcision, *as* a seal of the righteousness of the faith that *he had* in the *condition* of uncircumcision, that he might become *the* father of all those who believe, though they have not been circumcised, in order that the righteousness *of faith* might also be imputed to them" (vs 7-11).

Let's go back to Genesis 15 and let's see this account here. Then we will look at the account

where then he went to offer Isaac and we'll see the difference. They don't conflict, they're two different accounts of the same thing, the same kind of action based upon what Abraham did. Now let's notice how this belief started out.

Genesis 15:1: "After these things the Word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, 'Fear not, Abram... [his name wasn't Abraham at that time] ...I *am* your shield and your exceedingly great reward.' And Abram said, 'Lord GOD, what will You give me since I go childless, and the heir of my house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus?'.... [Think what world conditions would be if that would have happened?] ...And Abram said, 'Behold, You have given no seed to me; and lo, one born in my house *is* my heir'" (vs 1-3).

Abraham was really kind of testing God a little bit, saying, 'Look with these circumstances and I've been following You all these years, Lord, and look at this and look at that and you know I want to do what You say, but let's do it the easy way. Here's Eliezer of Damascus and you know he's born in my house, he could be one of my heirs, too; You know the law says that. That's all right.'

Verse 4: And behold, the Word of the LORD *came* to him saying, 'This man shall not be your heir; but he that shall come forth out of your own loins shall be your heir.'.... [What could be do about that except believe? *It's all he could do!*] ...And He brought him outside and said, 'Look now toward the heavens and number the stars—if you are able to count them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your seed be.' And he believed in the LORD. And He accounted it to him for righteousness" (vs 4-6).

*There was nothing for him to do but believe.* He didn't say, 'Oh, come on God, don't tell me this. I don't believe that.' *He believed!* He was uncircumcised at this point.

Then we come to Gen. 17 when he was 99-years-old, some years after the account in Gen. 15. Then we find that that's when he was circumcised. I'll let you read the whole situation there.

Here's the other account that James is talking about, same Abraham, same faith; now there was something to do, which then is a *work of faith*. If you have faith:

- How do you prove your faith? *By doing what God says when there is something to do!*
- How do you count your faith when there's nothing to do? *By believing!*

And whenever there is that belief then there will always be something to do—*always!*

Genesis 22:1: "And it came to pass after

these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' And He said, 'Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love...' (vs 1-2).

Can you imagine how he would love Isaac? By the way, this made Ishmael even madder. Can you imagine how he loved Isaac? Can you imagine if you had no children of your own and you tried and tried ever since you were married, clear up to when you were 75-years-old, and your wife got everything all complicated and you had Ishmael through Hagar and that made things worse? You had that fight and strain going on; finally you had to get rid of him and Hagar, because the household was divided. And then here is Isaac, that *he loved, the son of promise*.

"...Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there... [he knew from the minute that he left that he was going to offer his son] ...for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you.' And Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two *of* his young men with him, and Isaac his son. And he split the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up and went to the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off" (vs 2-4).

There are times when we do things because God says to do them, and if for *no other reason than God says to do them!* We know from Heb. 11 that he believed God would raise him from the dead. Was that not an awful lot of faith in God at that point? Was it not? *Yes, absolutely!* Try and picture it in your mind that if you were Abraham coming up to this mountain and you knew this was the place. And here's the son you love. Now we figured out one time that he would be as young as 12 and as old as 30. Either way, Isaac had to have a certain amount of belief and faith too. *Yes, he would!*

Verse 5: "And Abraham said to his young men, 'You stay here with the donkey, and I and the boy will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.' And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac his son...." (vs 5-6). How about that! Carrying your own wood to your own sacrifice.

"...And he took the fire *pot* in his hand..." (v 6). In other words he had a little pot with some coals in it, took it in his hands.

"...and a knife. And they both went together. And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, 'My father.' And he said, 'Here I *am*, my son.' And he said, 'Behold the fire and the wood.... [I can see the fire and the wood] ...But where is the lamb for a burnt offering?'" (vs 6-7).

You talk about walking in faith! I mean, you're walking right up there and you can see where it's going to be.

Verse 8: "And Abraham said, 'My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.' ...." If Isaac were all modern and scientific he would say, 'Ahhh,' but he didn't, so Isaac had to have a certain amount of faith.

"...So, they both went on together. And they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there... [stone by stone] ...and laid the wood in order. And he bound his son Isaac and laid him on the wood, upon the altar" (vs 8-9).

Now that's quite an experience *for both of them!* Put yourself in Isaac's place, bound and laid on the wood. Put yourself in Abraham's place, with the knife, with the coals, and everything ready to go. When is God going to provide? You've scanned the horizon; there is nothing there.

Verse 10: "And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son." Some of them portrayed he had the knife already up in the air. I don't know whether it was or not. It doesn't indicate that here. It didn't say he raised the knife, but he put his hand forth and took the knife to slay his son.

Verse 11: "And the angel of the LORD called to him from the heavens and said, 'Abraham! Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I *am*.' And He said, 'Do not lay your hand upon the lad, nor do anything to him, **for now I know that you fear God...**'" (vs 11-12).

Think of this for a minute. When you look at all the trials and difficulties you go through. And lot's of times we like to say, 'Boy, it would be nice if we didn't have trials and difficulties. Well, go back and read Abraham's life. He had all kinds of them. And then to have this laid on top of it, right at this point, right to the last minute. And then the message comes from God, '**Now I know that you fear God.**' You stop and think about what is it that we have done in comparison or relationship? *Not very much!*

He says: "...for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me" (v 12).

What is it that God has asked you to do? What is it that God has asked you to do that you have withheld from God, because you don't think it's fair? I am asking myself, too. None of us have gone through anything like this! And we hope and pray God that we don't have to. Frankly, brethren, we need to ask ourselves: **If it were put upon us**

**like this, would we survive that test?** *It would be difficult, indeed, to say yes in the affirmative, with absolute conviction that it would be so!*

Then you can look at it the other way, what if God didn't intervene and he had to come home and tell Sarah? Can you imagine 'the holy wrath' from his wife? None of these things bothered him. And so then, lo and behold a miracle:

Verse 13: "And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind *him* a ram was entangled in a thicket by its horns.... [I truly believe that *God created that ram, that instant*, right there] ...And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide; so that it is said *until* this day, 'In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.' And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, 'By Myself have I sworn,' says the LORD..." (vs 13-16).

Fantastic blessing comes when? ***After the trial of righteousness; after the works of faith have then perfected that faith by what was done!***

"...because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son; that in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens, and as the sand, which is upon the seashore. And your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, **because you have obeyed My voice.**' .... [he believed to do what God had said] ...Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham lived at Beersheba" (vs 16-19).

*Probably thanking God for every minute of every of day that he had with Isaac after that!*

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) James 2:5-13, 5-10
- 2) 1 John 3:4
- 3) Leviticus 19:13-18
- 4) James 2:10, 12-13
- 5) Matthew 18:21-35
- 6) Matthew 5:7
- 7) James 2:14-26, 14
- 8) Matthew 7:21-27
- 9) James 2:14-16
- 10) Mark 7:3-7
- 11) Luke 10:25-37
- 12) James 2:17-22

- 13) Romans 4:1-11
- 14) Genesis 15:1-6
- 15) Genesis 22:1-19

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- James 2:2
- Matthew 19
- Genesis 18 & 19
- Matthew 6:14-15
- 1 Corinthians 10
- Genesis 17
- Hebrews 11

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## Epistle of James V What it Means to have Works of Faith

Fred R. Coulter

The book of James was written by the brother of the Lord and its amazing how similar that his writings are to the writing of Matthew. This was written to those Jewish believing congregations who were also, at the time that this was written, still a part of the synagogue.

Let's review a little bit what we covered last time on *faith*. Let's understand and realize that everything that James is saying fits in and coordinates with all the rest of the teachings of the New Testament. There are some people who believe that the book of James contradicts Paul's writing on faith because of what James says about works and what James says about faith.

Let's see exactly what kind of faith that Paul is talking about here, when we come to the understanding of God's Word. Paul talks about *a faith that motivates you to obey God!* James is talking about *a faith that will motivate works of faith*. It's exactly the same thing. The difference that Paul is talking about is *a work*, which you do as an individual, which then you go before God and you claim debts God to you; that He must do something for you, because of what you have done. That's a *work of law* that Paul says. It's a particularly Jewish problem, because they truly, truly believe that their works compel God to do something for them. They are coming at the same kind of faith from a little bit different point of view.

Paul says, Romans 3:31: "Are we, then, abolishing *the Law* through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE!..." The Apostle John says, "The one who says, he knows Him [Christ] and is not keeping His commandments is a liar and the Truth is not in him." So they are all speaking the same thing. It's just like looking at a ball or sphere or picture. You can look at it from different angles, you're looking at the same thing, but you explain it in a little bit different way. And that is the only difference here.

"...Rather... [truly, through faith] ...we are establishing *the Law*" (v 31). Now what does that mean? *That means exactly the same thing as James is saying!*

I think it's very important that we do review this and fully understand all of Rom. 4 and James 2 in relation to *faith and works*. It's talking about the same kind of faith, but two different kinds of works.

James 2:14: "My brethren, what good *does* it do, if anyone says..."—professing. There is a *profession of faith*, and that's what James is talking

about, because his *works of faith* then are the complete faith. Paul is talking about *works of law of Judaism* to compel God to do something. But it's talking about the same faith.

"...if anyone says *that he* has faith..." (v 14).

- I love God, I believe God, *then turn around and swear and curse.*
- Oh, I think the Bible is the Word of God, Praise God for the Bible, *but do you obey the Bible?*
- Well, no I don't want to get into that kind of religious thing, but I believe the Bible is the Word of God.

*There are no works to back up that faith*, because if you truly have faith and truly believe it is going to give you the motivation to do what God wants you to do. That's the whole purpose of what James is saying here.

"...what good *does* it do, if anyone says *that he* has faith, and does not have works? Is faith able to save him?" (v 14). Those who say, 'Lord, Lord, have we not done this? Have we not done that? Have we not done the other thing?' And that's a *profession!*

Let's review just a little bit differently than we did last time. Here is a *profession of faith*, but that profession of faith is *not faith in reality*.

It's just like as I've used the analogy before of water. Water is made up of hydrogen and oxygen combined. You cannot have water unless it's combined. You can have oxygen over here in isolation. You can have hydrogen over here in isolation. They do the exact opposite of water. They are both flammable; they both will burn. But when you combine them in H<sub>2</sub>O, you have water and it does the opposite; it puts out the fire. So it's the same way with faith. If you have a *profession* over here, which is part of faith:

- I love the Lord
- I believe the Lord
- I think the Word of God is the Word of God
- I think the Bible is His Word

Then you have no works of faith to back up that belief. Can that faith save you? *Cannot!* There's no salvation in that *profession*.

Luke 6:46 coordinates with the same account of the Sermon on the Mount given by Jesus in Matt. 5-7. This coordinates with Matt. 7:21.

Luke 6:46: “And why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord’...” There are a lot of people would just go around and say, ‘Praise the Lord, bless the Lord, hallelujah.’ Jimmy Swaggart and how many others you want to name.

“...but you do not practice what I say?” (v 46). If you say, ‘Yes, Lord,’ and you don’t do it, *you have no faith*, so the *profession of faith* is meaningless.

Verse 47: “Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and practices them, I will show you what he is like.” Then he shows us a man that built on a rock and so forth.

The way the Bible was originally put together, the New Testament in particular, the order of books was this: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts. In most of the Bibles we have that exactly in that order. However, in the inspired version, which is still the same Greek Byzantine text order of the books, after the book of Acts, you have James, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>-Peter, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>-John, Jude and then you have Romans. So, when you read the Gospels and the book of Acts, then you come to the very first and perhaps the earliest epistle, which was written by James. It’s telling you very clearly that unless you do what God says, there is no salvation and that ***your life must reflect your profession by your works***. So that’s why it’s important to remember that.

James 2:15: “Now then, if there be a brother or sister who is naked and destitute of daily food... [so, he gives a concrete example] ...and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; be warmed and be filled,’ and does not give to them the things necessary for the body, what good is it?” (vs 15-16).

You have on the other hand then, those who won’t work, which Paul said, ‘If they won’t work, they won’t eat.’ Then you have by choice and deliberation, those who are lazy and derelict, not someone who is destitute because of circumstances which have fallen upon them, not necessarily of their own making. We have to balance all of this with the rest of the Bible.

This is the indigent problem that we have today in America. ‘Oh, we got to feed the homeless. Oh, we got to feed the poor.’ But, we are creating them faster than we can feed them, because the state, the U.S. government, has legitimized ‘bastardhood.’ By having illegitimate babies, mothers out there whoring around, having children, creating criminals and crooks—not a widow indeed, not someone who has paid into Social Security—our politicians, to buy votes and destroy this nation, have created a whole class of derelicts.

Now the media comes on and says, ‘Oh,

you’ve got to do this.’ Well, you see God would not solve it that way. He would take care of them, but He would say, ‘Go work! Stop your crime! Stop your whoredoms! Stop your fooling around! Marry that woman! Marry that man!’ There’s the opposite. ***There are works to help the poor without faith in the Word of God to correct it!*** You’ve got the two kinds.

- you have faithless works
- you have workless faith

• you have faith that works

or

- you have profession with no works

Verse 17: “In the same way also...” If you just tell them to be warmed and filled and don’t do the things that are necessary, what good does it do? What have you done?

“...faith... [by profession] ...if it does not have works, is dead, by itself” (v 17)—or being alone. ***A profession can never accomplish!***

If you have an obligation to do, let’s say you buy something and you get installment payments. And you sign your name on the contract, ‘Yes, I will pay the first of every month.’ So, you don’t pay. After a couple of months they call you and they send you some letters and they call you and say, ‘Are you going to pay?’ *Oh, I’m going to pay. Yes, oh yes, I’m going to pay.* And it goes on and you never paid. Your profession did not result in works to take care of your obligation, same thing with faith.

Verse 18: “But someone is going to say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’...” He’s looking at the situation here because that’s precisely what he’s giving here.

“...My answer is: You prove your faith to me through your works... [separate from your works] ...and ***I will prove my faith to you through my works***” (v 18). In other words, he is saying that ‘What motivates him to do the things that he does is *faith in God!*’

Now he gets to the heart of it, v 19: “Do you believe that God is one?... [there are a lot of people out there who believe that God is one] ...You do well to believe this.... [nothing wrong with that, but then he gives this clarification]: ...Even the demons believe... [present tense] ...and tremble in fear.”

- Do you have the faith of Jesus Christ?
- Christ’s very own faith in you?

or

- Do you have the *profession of faith*, which is the faith of demons?

They believe that God exists, but they won’t do what

God says! Now that may sound a little contradictory to say the faith of demons, but just think on that for a minute.

Verse 20: “But are you willing to understand... [Are you willing to comprehend? Are you willing to really put things together in the proper perspective of reality?] ...O foolish man, that **faith without works is dead**? Was not Abraham our father justified by works...” (vs 20-21).

This is where the contradiction appears to be with Paul, because Paul says he was justified by faith. We’ll go back and review that and see that it was talking about two separate incidences altogether. Abraham was justified because he believed, but he was also justified because *that belief caused him to do what God said*.

Verse 21: “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac, his own son, upon the altar? Do you not see that faith was working together with his works, and **by works his faith was perfected**?” (vs 21-22)—completed, made whole, achieve the results God wants.

Verse 23: “And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Now, Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness’; and he was called a friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.... [profession of faith] ...Now, in the same manner also, was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when, after receiving the messengers, she sent *them* out a different way?” (vs 23-25).

So, you’ve got Abraham, who’s the epitome of the faithful, you might say, the best; then you have Rahab, whom you can say would be the worst. So it’s showing that God requires faith from everyone, regardless of your status, regardless of whatever. It’s all so interesting when you begin to understand it, that Abraham being a Hebrew—a lot of people think that Abraham was a Jew, but that’s not correct; Abraham was a Hebrew, and Rahab was a Canaanite.

This shows a very interesting thing, that even the Canaanite woman, who was a harlot **believed** God! You go back and read the account. She says, ‘Oh, I have heard the wonderful things that the Lord did, in bringing you out of Egypt and how He destroyed all those nations before you. And everyone here is afraid and we know we are just going to be like grasshoppers before your Lord.’ So there was a lot more to Rahab’s situation that just hanging out the scarlet thread to show where her window was, that it would not be destroyed. But she was justified because *she did what God wanted* her to do!

Let’s see how that every one of Abraham’s

actions in obedience to God was **a result of faith**, was **a result of belief**. There was one instance that the Apostle Paul refers to where all Abraham could do was *believe*. There was no action required.

Genesis 12:1: “And the LORD said to Abram, ‘Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father’s house into a land that I will show you.’” Here is *the faith of Abraham*! He and Isaac and Jacob wandered in that land of Canaan all those years and never received the promise of that inheritance to personally have themselves. Now you think about that; that’s much like us. We have been promised the Kingdom, but we don’t receive it until the resurrection. .

Abraham being *the father of the faithful* and Abraham also being *a friend of God*—and we’ll also see that *we are called the friends of Christ*, because we have that same faith—but there is so much here compacted into the teaching, into the whole account of Abraham. At this point he was called Abram and not Abraham. But notice the promise. Here’s the promise. ‘Do you believe God, what He has promised?’ Well Abraham did.

God said, v 2: “‘And I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great. And you shall be a blessing. And I will bless those that bless you and curse the one who curses you. And in you shall all families of the earth be blessed.’ Then Abram departed, even as the LORD had spoken to him....” (vs 2-4).

What if Abram said, ‘Well now, LORD, why don’t You prove it to me that You’re going to do this? I will do it LORD, when I see You do some work for me.’ Now you see how the shoe gets put on the other foot and too many people have it that way. The only one that God ever did that for was Gideon. Remember Gideon said, ‘Well, Lord, how am I going to know I’m going to win this battle?’ He says, ‘I’ll make you a proposition, Lord, I’ll put the fleece down here and if in the morning that fleece is dry, I’ll believe that I’m going to win the battle.’ So, he came back in the morning and what happened? The fleece was dry, no dew on it. So he said, ‘Well, let’s reverse this Lord. Let’s have no dew on the ground and all the dew in the fleece and let me check it tomorrow and if it’s that way then I’ll go ahead.’ So, God indulged and did it. But, very seldom does God do it that way.

In Gen. 15 we also find the blessing that God has given here, where He said, ‘You will have the seed from your own body.’

Genesis 15:5: “And He brought him outside... [this was at night, took him out outside the camp] ...and said, ‘Look now toward the heavens and number the stars... [count the stars] ...if you are



able to count them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your seed be.’”

What was Abraham supposed to do? *Nothing!* There was no work required. This is why Paul said, ‘That Abraham *believed* God’ and quoted the Scripture, because in this case there was no work. He had to believe God, because God *is* God. He couldn’t count the stars. God didn’t tell him, ‘Look Abraham count the stars and then do this.’ He said, ‘Abraham, I want you to come out here and I want you to look at these stars.’ Quite an awesome thing, no smog then. And I suppose the Middle East is just like Texas. The stars are bigger there. Here it is in the desert night and looking up at all those stars and God says to Abraham, ‘Now I want you to understand Abraham, if you can count all of these—which he could not do—I want to tell you, My promise to you is going to be that your seed will be as the multitude of the stars in heaven.

Verse 6: “And **he believed in** the LORD.... [Not only believed what He said, but *believed* in Him: in His power, in His capacity, and in His ability to do what He said He would do.] ...and He counted **it to him for righteousness.**”

We won’t go through all the story about Ishmael; that created a lot of problems. We won’t go through the story of the promise of the covenant through circumcision; that was done by faith.

Ishmael was then 13-years-old when Isaac was born and Abraham was 100-years-old. When he believed God there in Gen. 15 he was 87-years-old. He had been walking with God 12 years. So that was about half way in-between. Abraham then believed God before he was circumcised. When we get to Rom. 4 we need to understand why that is so important. That’s because you are not going to obligate God to do something for you, because you do something physical. God is going to base it upon:

- the heart
- the faith
- the belief

—not ‘hocus pocus dominocus,’ what you do. That is *a work*. So, circumcision without faith is of no avail.

Gen. 22 is the account that James uses to show that Abraham was justified, made right before God, because his faith produced the action of obeying God and what God said to do under the most difficult and extreme circumstances.

God said to Abraham, Genesis 22:2: “...‘Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go into the land of Moriah, and offer him...’”

Heb. 11 shows that by that time, Abraham’s

faith was so strong that *he knew* that God would raise Isaac from the dead. If that’s what God said to do and God is Holy, righteous and pure; if God is true and everything about God is right—which it is—then *he knew* that God could raise him from the dead and that what He was asking him to do was within the realm of what God chose to ask him to do and he should act in faith upon that. You know the whole account; just when he was ready to offer him, all of a sudden there was a ram caught in the thicket.

I personally believe that God instantaneously created that offering substitute animal for Isaac, right there. Because Abraham got up and he looked all around before he put Isaac on the altar and there was no offering. Even Isaac said, ‘Father, where is the offering?’ And Abraham said, ‘My son, God will provide.’ And He did—didn’t He? By supernatural intervention! But what I want you to understand here is *why this is so powerful and why the impact of this with James is so important*. What James is doing, he is filling in the other half of Paul. Let’s put it the other way around, since James wrote first, Paul is filling in the other half of James.

Verse 11: “And the angel of the LORD called to him from the heavens and said, ‘Abraham! Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I *am*.’” I guess I would too, right at that minute ready to put the knife to the throat of my own son, my only son, and being 112-plus-years-old! I’d say, ‘Here I am,’ too.

Verse 12: “And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand upon the lad, nor do anything to him, for **now I know that you fear God**...’” Did God not know that before? Did Abraham commit a lot of sins, break God’s laws? Well it’s not recorded that he did! Let’s understand something here. From the time Abraham was 75-years-old until a minimum of one 112-years-old, that is 37 years of:

- walking with God
- being a friend of God
- believing God
- keeping His commandments

Genesis 26:5: ““Because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.”” For 37 years he did this.

Then He says, Genesis 22:12: “...‘now I know that you fear God...’” God could conclude that after this life of 37 years of living God’s way, walking with God, talking with God.

“...**now I know** that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me” (v 12).

There are many analogies we can draw on here concerning God the Father and Jesus Christ. Many different stories we can glean out of this, but

we won't take the time to do that. But we need to ask the questions:

- What about me?
- What about you?
- Can God say that of you?

or

- Are you looking for an opportunity to disobey God by weakness and excuse?
- By deliberation and viciousness?

or

- Is your human nature still so much in control of you that God doesn't know that you truly fear Him?

You need to think about that and you need to ask yourself that question, because we are dealing with:

- a personal God
- a personal Savior
- a personal calling
- a personal faith
- a personal salvation

—*and God is testing you personally!* It's not a corporate thing; because you belong to a church salvation is automatic. It's not a corporate thing; because we circumcise our sons on the eighth day that they are all going to be saved. ***It is an individual and personal thing!*** But notice the magnitude of what happened after this. Then he offered the ram in its place.

Verse 15: "And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, 'By Myself have I sworn'..." (vs 15-16).

God doesn't need to swear, because God's Word is true and God's Word is right. God needs no witness to say that He is true. We as human beings may need to sign affidavits to guarantee something. God doesn't. But to absolutely, profoundly show the irreversibility of what God has promised to and through Abraham, He says:

Verse 16: "...**'By Myself have I sworn,' says the LORD, 'because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son; that in blessing I will bless you,** and in multiplying I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens, and as the sand, which is upon the seashore. And your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, **because you have obeyed My voice**" (vs 16-18).

The belief then, which is the faith, which then produces the *works of faith!* You apply that to your Christian life. There are a whole lot more lessons in here that we could go at—we could probably spend just three or four sermons alone just

on the life of Abraham.

Let's see where Paul talking about the same thing. Now, I know this is a little repetitious, but I think it's so profound and I think it's so important and I think it's something that we have to fully comprehend and grasp in order to understand what kind of faith we need to have.

I talked to a person recently who was a Sunday-keeper, and this person said, when I said we ought to keep the commandments of God:

- Oh, but no one can keep the commandments of God!

Do you murder?

- Oh, no!

Do you steal?

- Oh, no!

Are you keeping the commandments of God? Sure you are. Oh, but the Sabbath thing now. You really don't believe God. You want all the good things. You want *your* sins forgiven. See how selfish that Protestant religion is?

- God, we appropriate Your name.

No one appropriates the name of Jesus Christ. He calls you.

You don't have the grace of God given to you because you decide you're good enough to keep Sunday. That is not a work of faith. That is ***a work of disobedience, a work of disbelief***, because God says, 'Remember the Sabbath,' *not Sunday*, 'to keep it Holy,' *not Sunday*. For in six days God created the heavens and the earth and all that therein is and rested the seventh-day and blessed it and sanctified it and hallowed it' and said, 'Keep the Sabbath Day.'

What do you think Abraham did? As Jesus said when the Pharisees and Sadducees said, 'We're Abraham's seed.' He says, 'I know that. If you were truly Abraham's children you would do the works of Abraham,' because he had faith.

Romans 3:31: "Are we, then, abolishing *the* Law through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE!... [truly, righteously] ...Rather, we are establishing *the* Law."

- the Law is kept through faith
- the Law is kept through love

As Jesus said, 'If you love Me, keep My commandments.' If you don't love God, you're not going to keep His commandments. If you profess, 'I love God,' but don't keep His commandments—what did John say? *You're a liar! You are living a lie!* And what is the lie concerning Sabbath and Sunday? The lie is that Sunday is the day for the New Testament! *That is the lie!* Jesus said, 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore, the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus

Christ, is Lord of the Sabbath.’ You can apply that to anything of God.

- Is not God Lord of the first commandment? *You shall have no other Gods before Me!*
- Is God not Lord of the second commandment? *No idols to be made or bow down and worship them!*
- Is God not Lord of the third commandment? *You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain!*
- Is not God Lord of the fourth commandment? *Remember the Sabbath to keep it Holy!*
- Is He not the Lord of all of them? *Yes!*
- Do you **believe** that?

If you do and you act upon that, you are **establishing law because you believe God!** Because God cares for us!

We could take the same example of clean and unclean meats. God says don’t eat these things. Why? God is love; God cares for us! And now we find more and more there are things then, which show that we shouldn’t eat these unclean foods, such as parasites, or disease or toxins that are in these things; which God says are not food, but which people consider food and they are going to eat them, so they get sick and die, because they didn’t believe God. They thought *their works* of refrigeration, of cooking, whatever, is going to undo what God said. *Never happen!*

(go to the next track)

Romans 4:6: “Even as David also declares the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness separate from works...” God is going to give it to you and that righteousness is right standing before God. It does not relieve us from keeping the commandments of God. It changes the whole perspective of how we approach the commandments of God.

Verse 7: “Blessed are *those* whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is the* man to whom *the* Lord will not impute *any* sin.’ Now then, *does* this blessedness *come* upon the circumcision *only*, or also upon the uncircumcision? For we are saying that faith was imputed to Abraham for righteousness.... [so, he quotes it again]: ...In what condition, therefore was it imputed? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision...” (vs 7-10).

Gen. 15 is where he believed God, was before circumcision. As a matter of fact, 12 years ahead of time. Now this becomes very galling to the Jews. Oh, they in their arrogance think every other person besides a Jew is unworthy of anything. That’s

why they’ve suffered all that they’ve suffered through these years. And very simple for the Jews—just believe God. Don’t trust in your works. Same way with you as a Christian, just believe God. Don’t trust in your works. Let your works be a reflection of your trust and faith in God!

“...but in uncircumcision. And *afterwards* he received *the* sign of circumcision, *as* a seal of the righteousness of the faith that *he had* in the *condition* of uncircumcision, that he might become *the* father of all those who believe, though they have not been circumcised, in order that the righteousness *of faith* might also be imputed to them” (vs 10-11).

This is the whole thing, which upset the whole New Testament Church. What a terrible situation they went through with this argument of circumcision and uncircumcision. WOW! You think you have problems in today’s faith, you think you have problems in today’s world. There are problems in any generation of Christians, in any age, as we are going to see when we get to James 3.

Verse 12: “And *that* he might become *the* father of *the* circumcision—not to those who are of the circumcision only, but also to those who walk in the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham, which he had during *his* uncircumcision. For the promise to Abraham, or to his seed, that he should be **heir of the world...**” (vs 12-13). Notice how that whole promise was expanded, not just the land, but “...**heir of the world...**”

“...*was* not *given* through law; rather, *it was* through *the* righteousness of faith; because if those of *the* law *be* *the* heirs, *then* faith is made void, and the promise *is* made of no effect” (vs 13-14).

In other words, if you compel God to do something *because of what you do*, there is no faith involved. Now what about those who believe God? God does not, has not, will not ever operate on that basis whatsoever—Old Testament or New Testament. It has to be on belief. It has to be on faith and you have to have the works of faith. You cannot have faith without works.

Verse 15: “For the Law works out wrath...” The Law tells right and wrong. It doesn’t make you do anything. The Law only corrects you when you break it. But since, as human beings, we need God’s forgiveness. You can’t forgive law-breaking with law-keeping. It must be an act separate and above and beyond, that’s called:

- forgiveness
- justification
- made in right standing with God

That’s what he is saying here, “...because where no law is, *there is* no transgression” (v 15). We see that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Verse 16: “For this reason *it is* of faith, in order that *it might be* by grace, to the end that the promise might be certain to all the seed...”

In you shall all the nations of the world be blessed! What seed do we have? Be we Jew or Gentile? The seed of the begettall that comes from God the Father! Are we not the children of Abraham? Are we not heirs of the promise? Yes!

“...not to the one who is of the law only, but also to the one who is of *the* faith of Abraham, who is *the* father of us all, (exactly as it is written: ‘I have made you a father of many nations.’) before God in Whom he believed, Who gives life to the dead, and calls the things that are not as though they are; *and* who against hope **believed in hope...**” (vs 16-18). ***There are times when you just have to believe in hope!***

- there’s nothing concrete there
- there is nothing you can put your hand on
- there is nothing you can hold and hug

But you believe in hope because God said so!

That’s what it was with Abraham. Look at him, he went 25 years before Isaac was born and the older he got the more hopeless from a physical point of view it became for him to have children, *but he still believed God!* That’s the kind of faith we need to have. Not that God is going to do our will, but that kind of faith that *He is going to do His will.*

Imagine when Abraham is resurrected and God says, ‘This is just the first resurrection Abraham, but I want you to see all the spiritual sons of God that are in the Kingdom of God, because of the promise that I gave to you, because you offered your only son Isaac, ***because you believed My promise.*** And furthermore, all of those that come into the Kingdom during the Millennium are going to be your seed. All of the nations from this time on are going to be of your seed, and by the time this whole great plan of God is finished, how many are going to be the seed of Abraham? That staggers the mind! Can we not then believe God?

Verse 19: “And he, not being weak in the faith, considered not his own body, already having become dead, being about one hundred years old, nor *did he consider* the deadness of Sarah’s womb; and he did not doubt the promise of God through unbelief; rather, he was strengthened in the faith, giving glory to God; for he was fully persuaded that what He has promised, He is also able ... [had the power, the ‘dunamis’] ...to do” (vs 19-21).

Now there are a lot of people who have *profession of faith* and they don’t act upon that profession. They want to be Christians by profession, but not in deed, *not in works of faith.* If

you don’t have that *works of faith* and we’re going to see, just like the body has no spirit is dead, so *the mouthing of faith is worthless, being alone!*

Let’s see that we are all the children of Abraham.

- the more that we study the Word of God
- the more that we drink in the Word of God
- the more that we really get in and let the Word of God dwell in us richly

*as the Apostle Paul said*

- with the Spirit of God
- the more there is for us

—because the Word of God is so profound. The Word of God is so absolutely magnificent that we can be fed continuously to the very depths of our being and beyond that capacity as God gives us His Spirit to understand God’s way.

So, we can’t count on our works by saying, ‘Oh well, I know the Word of God, yeah, I studied that. Yep, yep! I’m preaching the same thing I did 34 years ago.’ Well, that’s fine, but what about today? That’s why we have to grow in grace and knowledge. We can’t ever be at a point where we say we know God’s Word. We cannot ever be at a point that we say as long as we are living in the flesh that ‘I am perfected.’ No we are not! We are being perfected, but that completion of perfection is *at the resurrection!*

Galatians 3:26: “Because you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of *you* as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ” (vs 26-27).

That’s what we need to have. Just like Abraham had to count the cost concerning Isaac, Jesus said that *we have to count the cost.* We have to put everything aside for that belief and the precious promise of being the very children of God. And that’s what the baptism of Christ is all about.

Verse 28: “There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” That is, as you stand before the throne of God. Living in this physical world we’re still male and female, and whatever we may be gives us no special standing before God. What gives us the special standing before God is ***God’s choice of us in Christ!***

“...for you are all one in Christ Jesus.... [that’s why James says, ‘Brethren, my beloved brethren,’ etc.] ...And if you *are* Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to *the* promise.” (vs 28-29). That’s why the faith of Abraham is so mightily, mightily important.

Let’s go back to John 15 and let’s see also

something else that is applied to us by the very words of Jesus. Not only is Abraham called the father of the faithful, but he was also called a friend of God. Now that's a special relationship and you need to understand that.

John 15:7: "If you dwell in Me... [living and dwelling in Christ] ...and My words dwell in you..." That's what's so important. The words of Christ have to be living in you and that's what James is saying! If the Spirit of God is in you, if the words of Christ are living you, how are you going to conduct your life? That's the whole book of James.

"...and My words dwell in you, you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you" (v 7). But what does our will have to be? *Not my will be done, but Your will be done!* Then we can ask what we will, because it's according to the will of God and it will be done.

Verse 8: "In this is My Father glorified, that you bear **much fruit**... [**works of faith**] ...so shall you be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love" (vs 7-9).

John 14:15—where Jesus said 'continue in My love. "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely **My** commandments" How?

- based on love
- based on faith
- based on the Word of God living in you
- based on Christ living in you
- based on you living in Christ

Quite a different thing than to say, 'Here's a Law of God if I do it, God is going to have to do something for me.' You don't obligate God to you. I hope you see the difference in a *work of law*, which people create to enslave God to themselves, which He will never be.

John 15:10: "If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love." The whole motivation of what you do then is based upon love and faith.

Verse 11: "These things I have spoken so shall you be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full. This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you" (vs 10-14).

- Do you want to argue with Christ?
- Do you want to pick and choose?

This is a broad definition: "...whatever I command you." But the point is, just like Abraham, we are the friends of God. And if we are the friends of God and if we love God, will we do anything contrary to that love? *Not willingly! Not in hypocritical premeditation!* That's what James is saying all the way through here.

Now let's go back to the book of James 2. There are many other Scriptures we could bring out, but we could perhaps preach a whole year just on faith alone. We see that James is talking about the faith of the mouth by profession **vs** the faith of the heart because you believe. And when you have the faith of the heart because you believe, you will have **works of faith** to do as Abraham did!

James 2:23: "...he was called a friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.... [or profession only] ...Now, in the same manner also, was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when, after receiving the messengers, she sent *them* out a different way? For as the body without *the* spirit is dead, in the same way also, **faith without works is dead**" (vs 23-26).

Now this is quite an analogy for us. Have you ever seen a dead body? If you have, is it living? *No!* The same way with faith! If you have faith, you're going to have the *works of faith*. And if you don't have the works of faith, **you are a dead corpse**, Scripturally speaking. Because just as a dead corpse is dead and no life in it, *so your profession from your mouth...* That's why when we get to James 3 it gets right into talking about the tongue, so the book of James is really fantastic when we get to it. But your profession with your lips, your profession with your tongue, **if you don't have works of faith, it's dead!**

This is what Paul is talking about in writing the book of Hebrews and he wrote the book of Hebrews. Luke probably was the one who did the writing for him. People say, 'Well, I don't know if this was written by the Apostle Paul, because his name wasn't there.' Well, they are not smart enough to even realize and understand, remember how he was received in Jerusalem? Do you think that the Apostle Paul could write a letter and say, 'The Apostle Paul to the Jews in Jerusalem?' Why, even those that believed were ready to stone him, because he was teaching the uncircumcised Gentiles to follow God and keep the Passover without being circumcised. That's why his name isn't here. Regardless, it's still the Word of God.

Here is the very foundation of which all of our faith has to be built upon and that foundation is Christ.

1-Corinthians 3:11: "For no one is able to

lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Here are the steps on how that is laid, Hebrews 6:1: “Therefore, advancing beyond the beginning principles... [going beyond] ...of the doctrines of Christ, we should go on to perfection...”

Which is what we need to be doing and that’s what James is writing about here. And as we see when we’ll get into James 3, he’s talking about the perfect man. No one has made it, yet, but we:

“...go on to perfection; not laying again *the* foundation of repentance from dead works...” (v 1)—works without faith. ‘We be Abraham’s seed therefore God is obligated to us.’ **No!** Those are the kind of dead works, the washings of pots and pans and all the things of the traditions of Judaism: ***the works that have no faith!***

“...and *of* faith in God” (v 1). We’re talking about faith with works of faith. Not only faith toward God, but God’s faith *in* you.

Verse 2: “Of *the* doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of *the* resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And we will do this, if indeed God permits” (vs 2-3).

He was saying to them in Heb. 5, ‘Look! I really want to preach some things to you about Christ, but they are hard and difficult to say and you ought to be able to take them, but now you need someone to come along with a bottle and just feed you the wittle itty bitty milk.’ He says, ‘Strong meat is for them who have had their senses exercised by the Word of God and the faith of God.’ And that’s what we need to be doing. That’s what he’s saying here he wants to do. Go beyond these basic things.

There comes a time we need to get out of the sandbox. There comes a time we need to get out of elementary school. There comes a time we need to get out of junior high school and high school and college. There’s a time when we need to be growing in this grace and knowledge and walking toward the light of Christ in every thing that we do. Listen, no one can ever—and I want you to know this, too, of any of us, including me, none of us can ever say we have ever arrived at anything completely, perfectly in this flesh. That’s why the Apostle Paul says, ‘I count not myself to have apprehended...’ He’s going toward that goal.

Then after this, Paul gives warning of the unpardonable sin and there be some that are on the verge of doing that when you start throwing away the Truth of the Bible, start throwing away the things that the Word of God tells us, start choosing because your faith is not perfected with your works, because you want to do what you want to do:

- put away your wife
- keep Sunday
- eat unclean foods
- keep Christmas
- believe in a 15 Passover

***All of these stupid heresies being re-circled into the Church is incredible!*** It’s just like the winds blowing around. Here it comes back again! ***We need to be rooted and grounded in Christ!***

Let’s see how we can have this righteousness and this faith of God and how it needs to be done in our lives. Very important for us so that we can have *the motivation of faith*, so that we can have the works then which are there because of what we believe. I’ll tell you one thing for sure, every one of your works that you do in your life are essentially motivated by what you believe. You think about that. That is absolutely true! If you don’t believe in Christ totally, how do you think your works are going to be? *Same degree!*

Philippians 3:1: “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in *the* Lord. Indeed, for me to write the same things to you *is* not troublesome, but for you *it is* safe.... [or it was necessary] ...Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, **beware of the concision**” (vs 1-2). ***Yes!*** What is the concision? ***The totally cut off ones!***

In other words Paul is saying we’re not dealing with circumcision with these people, because instead of circumcising they like to hack up the faith and claim that through your belief you have no salvation because you are not a Jew and you are not a proselyte. Paul is saying, ‘Beware of the circumcision, concision here.’

Verse 3: “For we are the circumcision... [circumcised with the circumcision of Christ in our minds by conversion] ...who serve God in *the* spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in *the* flesh; though I might...” (vs 3-4). That’s why God chose Paul, because he was right there at the pinnacle of Judaism, a Pharisee.

Verse 4: “Though I might also have *reason* to trust in *the* flesh. If any other thinks he has *cause* to trust in *the* flesh, I *have* much more.” He says, ‘I’ve got more reason to.’ Here’s why.

Verse 5: “Circumcised on *the* eighth day; of *the* race of Israel, from *the* tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; with respect to law, a Pharisee; with respect to zeal, persecuting the Church; with respect to righteousness that *is* in law, blameless.... [don’t confuse that with sinless] ...Yet, the things that were gain to me, these things I have counted *as* loss for the sake of Christ” (vs 5-7). That’s how we need to view it. Notice what he says, ‘Yes and

undoubtedly, doubtless.’

Verse 8: “But then truly, I count **all things**... [every single thing is what that means in the Greek] ...to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things”—physical—all the things he trusted in physically he suffered the loss of because he believed in Christ.

“...and count *them* as dung; that I may gain Christ” (v 8). There are other four letter words which can apply to that, but he says, ‘My whole life was a pile of manure.’ Is that how we view our lives? When Paul was first called he said, ‘Well I wasn’t worthy to be called an apostle.’ And later on he said that he was sinning because he persecuted the Church and then in his last letter to Timothy he says, ‘**A sinner of whom I am chief**,’ which means that as you progress in your Christian life you understand:

- the righteousness of God more
- the mercy of God more
- the love of God more
- the faith of God more

You are going to see yourself in the truer light as James points out here, that you are nothing but walking, breathing sin in mind and body and spirit without Christ. That’s what Paul is saying here. He didn’t want anything of his own.

Verse 9: “And may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is derived* from law...”

You can have a standard that you do. *Remember Job!* Remember Job, the most righteous man besides Christ who ever walked the face of the earth; *for his own works he was unacceptable to God without faith!* That’s the whole trial of Job. Yes, he might have the righteousness of the law. He doesn’t want that, which is his own, but that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness that is of God by faith. And that of means ‘ek’—coming from God. And it’s Christ’s own faith

- in you
- from God
- to you
- in you and through you
- back to Christ

for the just shall live by faith; ***from faith unto faith!*** That’s what that means.

And now he says, v 10: “That I may know Him...” And that’s the whole burning desire of our lives brethren; to know God. If that’s not the burning desire of your life and if that is not the source of your faith and if that is not the belief that is in you,

*examine yourself as to why you profess Christianity at all.*

- Do you want to be thought well of by people? *You have your reward!*
- Do you want rules and regulations to have a pleasant life? *You have your reward!*
- Do you want eternal life? You do it God’s way!

Verse 10: “That I [you] may know Him, and the power... [‘dunamis’] ...of His resurrection...” To make that dead corpse stand alive by the power and the Word of God!

That’s what we’re talking about. That’s the whole motivation behind everything that is written in the Bible. Not so that we can be sweet and nice and lovely and have a religion and be thought well of in a community and wonderful standing in the world. Paul said, ‘**Dung! Dung! Dung! Dung!**’

“...and the fellowship of His sufferings...” (v 10). We’re going to suffer, guaranteed! Did Christ suffer? You think you are going to waltz into the Kingdom of God? Just strumming a happy tune? *Forget it!*

“...being conformed to His death; if by any means...” (vs 10-11). That God wants me to be there, however it may be, whatever my lot, how it may come to me makes no difference at all.

“...I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead; not as though I have already received, or have already been perfected... [this needs to be our attitude and this is how we can finish James 2]: ... **but I am striving**...” (vs 10-12).

- in faith
- in belief
- by works of faith
- by works of love
- by works of hope

“...so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained... [here’s our concurrent attitude of walking in faith that we need to do] ...but *this one thing I do*...” (vs 12-13). Let’s apply that to us personally. Let the ‘I’ of Paul become the ‘I’ of *you*.

“...forgetting the things that are behind...” (v 13). ***The grace of God covers our entire life!*** Don’t worry what has happened. Don’t worry of the things that have been difficult in your life. If God is with you and for you, nothing is against you at all whatsoever. Paul says “**...this one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind...**” In other words, do not destroy tomorrow with the lack of faith by rehearsing the sins of yesterday.

**“...and reaching forth to the things that are ahead... [everything that God has called us to] ...I press... [with the work of faith] ...toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”** (vs 13-14). That’s where our faith and that’s where our hope and that’s where our lives need to be, just like that.

Here is a promise right here, v 15: “So then, let as many as *be* perfect be of this mind...” That’s the only perfection you can have in the flesh, is be this kind of minded and perfected by God’s Spirit. And here’s a promise that if you do that, if you’re striving for that as Paul did.

“...And if *in* anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you” (v 15). So, you can repent of it and be right with God.

***That’s what it means to have works of faith and if that is so, then you have the Spirit of God and the body is alive and well.***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

#### Scripture References:

- 1) Romans 3:31
- 2) James 2:14
- 3) Luke 6:46-47
- 4) James 2:15-25
- 5) Genesis 12:1-4
- 6) Genesis 15:5-6
- 7) Genesis 22:2, 11-12
- 8) Genesis 26:5
- 9) Genesis 22:12, 15-18
- 10) Romans 3:31
- 11) Romans 4:6-21
- 12) Galatians 3:26-29
- 13) John 15:7-9
- 14) John 14:15
- 15) John 15:10-14
- 16) James 2:23-26
- 17) 1 Corinthians 3:11
- 18) Hebrews 6:1-3
- 19) Philippians 3:1-15

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 5-7
- Hebrews 11; 5
- James 3

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## Epistle of James VI James 3—Horses & Boats

Fred R. Coulter

As we come to James 3 we find that it follows in a proper sequence. In chapter 2 we saw that faith without works is dead. Now we're moving from faith without works to ***the tongue without control***. We're going to see how important that is. What you might want to do is reach in and grab hold of your tongue and you're going to see that it's awfully hard to control. It's not like picking up something that is more firm in its form. We're going to see there's a great deal to that.

James 3:1: "My brethren, do not many of you become teachers, knowing that we will receive more severe judgment; because we frequently offend, every one of us. If anyone does not offend in what he says, this one *is* a perfect man *and is* able also to hold in check the whole body. Remember, we put bits into horses' mouths in order that they may obey us, and we direct their entire bodies. Consider also *that* ships, being so large, and being driven by strong winds, are turned about by a very small rudder, wherever the will of the one who is steering may decide. In the same way also, **the tongue is a little member, but it boasts great things**. See how large a forest is set ablaze by a little fire" (vs 1-5).

Now there's an awful lot here and there's a reason why James chose horses and ships.

Let's go back to v 1 and see something that is very, very important concerning being a teacher. A lot of people like to set themselves up as teachers and some people think that they are called to be teachers. Well, if that is the case then you better make sure that what you're going to be teaching is correct. You better make sure that what you're teaching is according to the will and the Word of God, because we're going to receive the more stern judgment.

It's very interesting how James worded this. He didn't say, 'Brethren, don't many of you become teachers, because you will receive the more stringent judgment.' He said, *we*; he includes himself. When you go through this whole situation, James includes himself, as well. He is not talking about some remote other person: 'the they.' You know how it is: *they* did this, *they* did that, *they* did the other thing. He is saying, *we*; so we need to keep that in mind in relationship toward teaching. If you're not teaching the Words of Jesus Christ and you're not preaching the Words of Jesus Christ—what then are you doing? You need to think about that an awful lot if you want to be a teacher! There's nothing wrong with being a teacher, but you are going to have the

more stringent judgment as James said.

2-Tim. 2 is quite a section on teachers. As a matter of fact, all of what are called the *Pastoral Epistles*, which is 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>-Timothy and Titus. Those three are called the *Pastoral Epistles*. Philemon somewhat, but not as directly as 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>-Timothy, and Titus. These were written from the Apostle Paul to those that he trained in teaching.

We'll cover a quite a bit of the first and second chapters of 2-Tim., so we can understand what it is that are some of the requirements for being a teacher. 1-Tim. 3 are the requirements for an overseer, bishop. It's too important to just tell you to read it. Here's the foundation. I've seen where that people have been elevated to a teaching or preaching status and later on they just go down the tubes badly. I don't think it's necessarily a mistake upon selecting that person at that time to be a minister or teacher. But *they have to be faithful in what they are teaching after they become teachers!*

Here's the foundation, 1-Timothy 3:1: "Faithful *is* the saying, 'If any man aspires to *be* an overseer, he desires a good work.'" It is a good work, however there is no great office in the sense of we think of an enthroned, entitled position. It's not! This means just an official overseer of the Church, which you have to have. You cannot have someone saying, 'Well, I'm the overseer' and another one saying, 'No, I'm the overseer.' And then you have nothing but fights and struggles and all the political battles that go on with that. And I've seen that happen, too, and it's a mess.

But he says, v 2: Now then, it is obligatory *that* the overseer be blameless, *the* husband of one wife, vigilant, serious-minded, respectable, hospitable, skillful in teaching." You have to teach the Word of God, and you have to be teaching yourself if you are a teacher.

Verse 3: "Not given to much wine, not a bully, not greedy for selfish gain ... [because he has to handle the money of God] ...but kind, not a quarreler, not a lover of money; one who rules his own house well, having his children in subjection with all respect; (for if a man does not know how to rule his own household, how will he take care of the Church of God?)" (vs 1-5). Very simple, straightforward, common sense, down to earth, fundamental, foundational qualifications for anyone who is going to be a teacher.

Verse 6: "Not a novice..." Not someone

newly come to the faith and that's the big problem with Protestantism. They confuse teaching with witnessing or testifying. Someone newly come to the faith can testify what God has done for them. They can witness by telling someone else; 'I'm telling you what God has done in my life,' but for them to be a teacher is another whole ballgame. That's why so many of the ministers just turn out wrong and bad, because they are newly come to the faith. They are not someone who has been tried and tested by God in their Christian life as to how they are going to live. "Not a novice..."; *not someone newly come to the faith*.

"...lest he become conceited *and* fall into the same condemnation as the devil" (v 6)—which means exactly what it says. He's going to think:

- how good I am
- how great I am
- how much I know
- how much I've experienced
- I can teach
- I can lead

Then you're going to get all carried away in your vanity. If you're not willing to teach one person, but you want a thousand, then you are not a teacher indeed. Because you have to teach because of the Spirit of God in you, regardless of the numbers; because numbers don't mean anything.

What does it say about *the way*? '*For broad is the way that leads unto death and many there be which go in that gate.*' There are the vast numbers. '*But straight is the way and narrow is the gate that leads to life and few be that go in there at.*' So, if a person thinks it's going to be a grand and glorious thing and I'm going to have notoriety and my picture is going to be here and everyone is going to know my name, forget it! The snare of pride is going to come and cut you down. The one exercising that sword will be the devil. That's what it says right here; and "...and fall into the same condemnation as the devil."

Another warning. Don't set yourself up to be a teacher, because the devil is going to be after you. That's what it's saying here:

Verse 7: "It is mandatory that he also have a good report from those *who are outside the Church*, lest he fall into reproach and *the snare of the devil*."

Just like some of these politicians. 'I'm going to run for President and I am your best man, believe me! I am righteous, I am good, I have the best ideas.' And, lo and behold, someone comes along and says, 'Now, you know I remember this guy when he was over here and I know all of these bimbos that he was committing adultery with.'

Remember Gary Hart? Was he not cut down? *Yes!* This says that the devil is going to be after those who are teaching. And does he get to some? *Yes!* What happens? *They twist and they turn the Scriptures to their own destruction!* This is very important that we understand what it's saying here and the foundation.

Verse 8: "In the same way also, the deacons..." That doesn't mean deacons as policemen at the door of a church meeting hall or church building. This means *those who serve*. That's all a deacon is. Paul said he was a deacon, a minister, an apostle, and *all of those are ministering and serving positions*.

"...who serve *must* be serious-minded... [that means not flippant-minded] ...not hypocritical... [not double tongued] ...not given to much wine, not greedy for selfish gain; holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience" (vs 8-9).

In other words, if you are going to be a teacher, then you have got to hold the mystery of the faith as the top and absolute primary thing in your mind, in your heart, in your life and in your teaching, otherwise you lose your qualifications of a teacher.

Verse 10: "And let those *who meet the qualifications* also be proved first..."—tested; in other words, some kind of training program for them, as we will see later. Timothy was told to commit these things to faithful men who are able to teach.

"...then let them *be appointed to serve, if they are found to be blameless*. In the same way also, *their wives must* be serious-minded, not slanderers, sober *and* faithful in all things" (vs 10-11).

I want to say something here: I heard of a woman who one time said that she—being a minister's wife—had an office. Poppycock! Isn't any such thing! That is vanity, pride, arrogance and presumption upon such a woman who would assume to take that to herself so that she can carry on her husband's ministry, who has since died. *There is a false teacher indeed!* Just one example; we could have all kinds of other examples, but that one serves the purpose for right now.

Here's what a minister needs to rely on: not on his brain, *because his brain is as carnal as anybody else's*; not upon his intellect, *because intellect is not the thing which is going to produce the Spirit of God and the works of faith*. Paul makes that very clear right here. He's telling Timothy, who is a minister, and he knows he's going to be going on. He knows he's going to be martyred here real soon.

2-Timothy 1:6: “For this reason, I admonish you to stir up the gift of God that is in you by the laying on of my hands.” That is by the ordination that comes. There is a gift for a ministry. There is a gift of God’s Spirit for teaching, and that has to come from God. What does Paul say? *Stir it up!* How do you stir it up? By letting the full exercise of God’s Spirit be with you through all your circumstances, through your whole life and what you are doing. And stir that up.

- draw close to God
- study God’s Word
- drink it in
- do the things that God wants you to do

That’s how you stir it up.

Verse 7: “For God has not given us the spirit of fear...” *Oh, I wonder what the members of the congregation will think? What does God think? I wonder what the world will think? What does God think?*

Where there is fear there is torment and there is opportunity for politics and shenanigans. I know and I speak from experience, and I can tell you wherewith that is true.

**“...but of power, and of love, and of sound-mindedness” (v 7).**

- the right kind of teaching
- the right kind of intellect
- the right kind of approach

will come from God’s Word and God’s Spirit as you apply yourself as a teacher. This is what you have to base your ministry on or teaching on; the power of God, the love of God, and the mind of God. What did the Apostle Paul say in Phil. 2? *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus!* Is that not the source of our right-mindedness? *Yes, absolutely!* See how all of these things tie in? *Very important!*

Verse 8: “Therefore, you should not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner; but jointly suffer with *me for the sake of the Gospel*, according to *the power of God*.” They are going to come and if you are not willing—what is the old saying? *If you can’t stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen!*

Verse 9: “Who has saved us and called us with a Holy calling...” That’s what teaching is and teaching the Bible is a Holy calling.

“...not according to our works... [because we are great or anything like that] ...but according to His own purpose and grace, which *was* given us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time” (v 9). The whole purpose of God.

Verse 10: “But has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, Who has annulled death, and has brought to light *eternal* life and incorruptibility through the Gospel... [that’s what we are to preach] ...unto which I was ordained a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of *the* Gentiles; for which cause I am also suffering these things; nevertheless, I am not ashamed. For I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He has the power to keep what I have committed *to Him* for that day” (vs 8-12).

In other words, he’s saying: ‘I’m going right on, (Phil. 3) until that very final day.’ That’s how important it is.

2-Timothy 2:1: “Therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that *is* in Christ Jesus.” That’s the whole source of what a teacher and a minister is:

- to do
- to have
- to preach
- to teach
- to rely upon

—the very grace of God. All those trials and difficulties that you go through in your life is so that you’re going to see:

- that you need mercy
- that you need forgiveness
- that you need grace
- that you are no big mucky-muck, whatsoever

The first time you think you are a big mucky-muck, God just may throw you in the muck and let you see and understand where you are. That applies to everyone, me and everyone else, whomever is a teacher.

Verse 2: “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, these *things* commit to faithful men, such as will be competent to teach others also.” Then with the qualifications as we read there in 1-Tim. 3, about what they should do.

Verse 3: “You, therefore, endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one who is serving as a soldier becomes involved in civilian pursuits, so that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier” (vs 2-4).

He’s saying, ‘Now look, you’re not going to do it with your armor, you’re not going to do it with your way, but you’re going to do it with the armor of God.’

Ephesians 6:10: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in *the* Lord, and in the might of His strength. Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (vs 10-11). That’s what he needs:

- the tools of God, not his own
- the tools of the Spirit, not his own
- the tools that God alone can give

Through His grace, for the ministry and for teaching.

2-Timothy 2:5: “Also, if anyone strives to *win* in the athletic games, he is not crowned unless he has competed lawfully.” Need I say anymore? *Everything must be done lawfully according to the Word of God!* Not great ideas of vanity of how you come up with new fangled doctrine, which is not in the Word of God. There are plenty of them in the world that are doing that.

Verse 6: “*Moreover*, it is necessary for the husbandman to labor before partaking of the fruits. Give careful consideration to the things *that* I am telling you, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things. Remember *that* Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, *was* raised from among the dead according to my Gospel; for which I am suffering hardship, *even* to the point of being imprisoned like a criminal; but the Word of God has not been chained. Because of this... [here’s the attitude we need to have if we are going to be teachers]: ... I endure all things for the sake of the elect in order that they may obtain *the* salvation that *is* in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (vs 6-10).

Then he says, down here a little further, v 14: [don’t] “...argue over words... [v 15]: ...Diligently *study* to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who does not *need to be* ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of the Truth.” With that, because of these responsibilities and because of these things, therefore James says, ‘Don’t many of you become teachers because we are going to receive the sterner judgment.’

Now let’s come back to James 3:2 and this is quite an interesting verse here. “Because we... [he’s including himself here] ...frequently offend [sin]...” Now the word for sinning here in the Greek means *missing the mark*, but it is the same word that he uses in:

James 2:10: “For *if* anyone keeps the whole law, but sins... [misses the mark] ...in one aspect, he becomes guilty of all. For He Who said, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘You shall not commit murder.’ Now, if you do not commit adultery, but you commit murder, you have become a transgressor of *the Law*” (vs 10-11).

So therefore, instead of just saying, ‘we offend,’ which can in our modern terminology today mean you may ruffle someone’s feathers or to miss the mark, but you still hit the target. I thought it would be better to put in sin.

I’ll tell you why I did it that way right now:

because as Christians, when we have the Spirit of God and we begin this fight of resisting sin and human nature; and we really see and understand the sin that is within us, in our minds, in our hearts, in our being, because of the law of sin and death and so forth; we understand that we are not just offending someone and ruffling their feathers. We understand that we are not just missing the mark, but we feel the more intensity of sin. Just like Jesus said, ‘You’ve heard it said in past time, you shall not commit adultery, but I say unto you, whosoever looks upon a woman to lust after her has committed adultery already with her in his heart.’ And that’s the way that human nature is. So therefore, it is sinning.

James 3:2: “Because we frequently offend [sin], every one of us...” We find ourselves sinning. Why do you think Jesus said, ‘Forgive us our sins’? And that’s on a daily basis as we forgive those who sin against us or trespass against us.

“...If anyone does not offend in what he says, this one *is* a perfect man *and is* able also to hold in check the whole body” (v 2).

Let’s see who is accusing us of sin all the time, constantly. Not only do we have the fight against sin, which we do, but there is also Satan there, accusing us before God. ‘God, you called that one; look at that one; yea, look at that, he’s sinning. There he goes again.’ And when you do, you say, ‘Oh, God, why did I do that? Oh, have mercy on me. Forgive me.’ Remember Jesus Christ died for sinners; the good, the bad and the ugly.

Revelation 12:10: “And I heard a great voice in heaven say, ‘Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ because the accuser of our brethren has been cast down, who accuses them day and night before our God.’” If you never sinned, there would be nothing to accuse you of. That’s why James is saying, ‘We all frequently are sinning.’

Let’s see how this operates so we can understand the full impact of the fight of human nature that we have; that I have, that you have, that everyone has. What we understand here, that James is writing about, and he’s truly saying, ‘Look, even I,’ and James was considered by most people as the most righteous Christian around. He said, ‘We all frequently sin.’ Paul said the same thing of himself.

Romans 7:14: “For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am carnal, having been sold *as a slave* under sin.” That’s the way human nature is, totally. He says, ‘That in my flesh dwells not one good thing,’ because of the motivation of man. This is the most important thing for us to understand, that Christ is there with the grace of God to bring us out of these kinds of things.

Verse 15: “Because what I am working out myself, I do not know....” In other words, the sins that he is doing he really doesn’t want to allow and do, but they are there.

“...For what I do not desire to do, this I do; moreover, what I hate, this *is what* I do” (v 15). That’s the conflict we all go through. That is the conflict of human nature, which then pulls us down. Again you might say, ‘Well, is there any hope?’

- you are not out here killing
- you are not out here stealing
- you are not out here committing adultery
- you are not out here committing idolatry
- you are not out here taking the name of God in vain

—but the inner struggle is in the mind, and which relates then to the tongue and that’s what James is talking about.

Verse 16: “But if I am doing what I do not desire to do, I agree with the Law that *it is* good.... [it’s the standard which shows us the right and wrong] ...So then, I am no longer working it out myself...” (vs 16-17). In other words, I am not deliberately, by choice, willfully doing this.

“...rather, it is sin *that is* dwelling within me; because I fully understand that there is not dwelling within me—that is, within my fleshly being—*any* good. For the desire to do good is present within me; but how... [the means of myself] ...to work out that which is good, I do not find. For the good that I desire to do, I am not doing; but the evil that I do not desire to do, this I am doing. But if I do what I do not desire to do, I am no longer working it out myself, but sin *that is* dwelling within me. Consequently, I find this law *in my members*, that when I desire to do good, evil is present with me” (vs 17-21).

That’s the whole struggle of human nature. We find that that is called *the law of sin and death*.

Verse 22: “For I delight in the Law of God according to the inward man.” Sure we do. It’s right, it’s Holy, it’s just, it’s spiritual, it’s good, it’s true, it’s wonderful, it’s marvelous.

Verse 23: “But I see another law within my own members, warring against the law of my mind... [that’s where it is taking place] ...and leading me captive to the law of sin that is within my own members.”

For the Christian he is in an extricable position, as it were. Kind of, as you would say in the world, ‘dammed if you do and damned if you don’t’ and that’s why some people say, ‘Ah, why even try?’ But with the Spirit of God that’s not what we

are to do.

“...the law of sin that is within my own members.... [it’s there by inheritance] ...O *what a* wretched man I am!...” (vs 23-24). Notice the repentance, the understanding of self, the understanding of his own way.

Verse 24: “O *what a* wretched man I am! Who shall save me from the body of this death? I thank God *for His salvation* through our Lord Jesus Christ ....” (vs 24-25). Yes,

- Christ is going to deliver him
- Christ is going to deliver me
- Christ is going to deliver you
- Christ is going to deliver every one of us

“...Because of this, on the one hand, I myself serve the Law of God with *my* mind; but on the other hand, with the flesh, *I serve* the law of sin” (v 25)—*constantly overcoming*.

Romans 8:1: “Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit; because the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus...” (vs 1-2).

- What is that law of the Spirit of Christ?
- Have you ever understood what that law of the Spirit of Christ is?
- Have you ever understood how God applies that to you?
  - ✓in relationship to sin
  - ✓in relationship to forgiveness
  - ✓in relationship to overcoming

Since we have ‘the law of sin and death’ in us; if we’re constantly condemned by God, what hope is there for anybody? That’s why grace super-abounds above and beyond. It’s called the law of the Spirit.

Verse 2: “Because the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has delivered me... [made me free, justified me] ...**from the law of sin and death**” (v 2). You’ve been justified from that through Christ. Now, let’s see how that operation is taken care of.

- that’s why we need to come to the throne of grace daily
- that’s why we need grace to cover our lives constantly
- that’s why we need the sacrifice of Jesus
- Christ perpetually

We overcame him [Satan] through the blood of Christ. After we are accused day and night, but we have overcome him with the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony (Rev. 12). Even though Satan is there, even though that sin is there; if we do what 1-John says to do, then we will be in

that righteous right standing with God!

1-John 1:5: “And this is the message that we have heard from Him and are declaring to you: that God is Light, and there is no darkness at all in Him. If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth. However, if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin” (vs 5-7).

Not all as a bundle, but every sin as we find ourselves frequently sinning! Why? *Because of the law of sin and death within us, which is human nature!*

“...and the blood of Jesus Christ His own Son cleanses...”—“*katharizo*”—which means it is cleaning, scrubbing, wiping away, overcoming that sin through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Verse 8: “If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us..... [here’s the operation that takes care of it]: ...If we confess our own sins, **He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**” (vs 7-9). That is a tremendous blessing!

When a person comes to the point of committing the unpardonable sin, then they don’t want their sins forgiven. They don’t care about that, and they harden their heart and their mind and their attitude in absolute callous rebellion to God and trample under foot the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. That is the unpardonable sin. But as long as your attitude is sensitive, as long as you understand that you frequently sin on an ongoing basis, because of human nature, and you are coming to God and you are asking the blood of Christ be applied to you—to cover your life through the grace of God—your sins are being forgiven.

Verse 10: “If we say that we have not sinned...” Like the rich man: ‘Oh, good Lord, what should I do to inherit eternal life?’ And He says, ‘Keep the commandments.’ He says, ‘Well, I have done that. I haven’t sinned. I’m a good boy.’ Jesus said, ‘Sell all that you have.’

Verse 10: “If we say that we have not sinned, we are making Him a liar...” Why? *Because it says, ‘All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.’* We’re going to see that is why the Apostle James uses horses as an analogy, because human nature unconquered by God is just like a wild ravening horse, good for nothing!

“...we are making Him a liar, and His Word is not in us” (v 10).

1-John 2:1: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.... [he doesn’t want us out practicing sin] ...And *yet*, if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ *the* Righteous; and He is *the* propitiation for our sins; and not for our sins...” (vs 1-2). To forgive sin, it is covered in two ways:

1. *expiation*, that is remove a specific sin
2. *propitiation*, which means a continuous, on going, cleansing, and forgiveness as we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us

Lest we get all lifted up in our own vanity and say, ‘Boy, I’ve got God to forgive my sins.’ Even though that’s a true statement, said that way would be in vanity.

So John says, “...and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*” (v 2). That’s the ultimate plan of God in His time.

Let’s go over James 3 and see how we can apply this to our lives.

James 3:2: “Because we frequently offend, every one of us. If anyone does not offend in what he says, this one *is* a **perfect** man...”—that you think you have attained to the whole goal of God, but you haven’t.

“...and *is able* also to hold in check the whole body” (v 2). The word *able* comes from the Greek ‘*dunamis*’; you have the power to do that. Well, who of us have that power? *None of us!* I can think of things that I said even yesterday that I wish maybe I had not said that way or said at all. This tongue in here is an *unruly evil*.

(go to the next track)

Here’s the analogy and the lesson with horses and he says, v 3: “Remember, we put bits into horses’ mouths in order that they may obey us, and we direct their entire bodies.”

You think about that for a minute. Let’s look at a horse. A horse in the wild has got to be captured, corralled, and then broken; which is called tamed. A horse in the wild is likened to human nature unchecked. The only thing it is interested in is eating, drinking, maintaining his harem and making the herd larger.

- they are non-productive
- they don’t carry anyone on their backs
- they don’t pull any loads
- they don’t plow
- they are not fit for anything but to just eat, procreate and die

That’s why he uses horses. Another reason he uses

horses is because there are many different kinds of horses:

- there are little horses
- there are big horses
- there are work horses
- there are pull horses
- there are race horses
- there are show horses
- there are quarter horses

That's why he chose horses, because it also reflects the diversity of human beings in this analogy.

I saw a television show where it depicted the first crusade coming through Europe on down to Jerusalem and it showed those French horses that they used. Those were huge, bulky—it looked just like a tank—big thick neck, big thick chest, big thick legs, and it was needed to carry the knights with all of the steel and the armor that they had. It was quite a horse! It was some horse! Then they had a companion horse with it, which was just kind of like a nice little quarter horse that we might have today, or an Arabian horse. It was beautiful and nice; that big ole thick workhorse was kind of ugly looking really, and muscular compared to it. But, each one has a purpose. Each one had to be trained and each one had to have a bit in its mouth to make it go and do what the driver or the owner wanted, it had to have control over it. Now that's why he uses this.

“...that they may obey us, and we direct their entire bodies” (v 3).

Now let's look at some things concerning horses, concerning another analogy from that; the reins, try the reins, try the heart and so forth. Let's see what happens when a whole society runs like horses, live like horses. That's what we have today: bucking, kicking, stomping, breeding, neighing. You'll see quite a prophetic statement about how people conduct their lives.

One night here recently I had an opportunity to go to a restaurant to have dinner and I didn't know what was going on there because I wasn't used to this restaurant. After sitting there eating and watching the people for a while, I realized that we had a horse scene going on here. We had the women in there looking for their pickups for that night. When I read this Scripture here it just reminded me of it; that here you've got unbridled, unchecked human nature with everyone 'neighing' after his neighbor's wife.

Jeremiah 5:7: “How shall I pardon you for this? Your children have forsaken Me, and have sworn by them that are not gods.... [just like the wild, unbridled horse] ...When I had fed them to the full, then they committed adultery, and gathered

themselves by troops in a harlot's house. They were *like* lusty, well-fed stallions in the morning; every one neighing after his neighbor's wife. Shall I not punish for these *things*?' says the LORD....” (vs 7-9).

Sure, He's going to visit for these things, but that's just the way that human nature is; just like a wild horse.

Now let's look at some other Scriptures giving some other analogies about human nature. We'll see some various things that have been used and this is why James, the brother of Jesus, took this and used this. This was a well thought out verse. This was not something that was: 'Oh, well, that's good—horses. Yea, I'll write about horses.' He got this out of the Bible.

Psalms 32:9: “Be not like the horse, or like the mule...” What about mules? They're stubborn! Mules are half-breeds; they're a cross between a donkey and a horse. That's why their nature is contrary. There are too many half-breeds out there; too many half-breed Christians that are stubborn, that won't do the will of God, but they want their own way. That's why here is the perfect Psalm for you, perfect verse.

Verse 9: “Be not like the horse, or like the mule, which have no understanding—which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you.” That's why James wrote the verse the way he did. We can understand that we're not to be that way; but as an analogy that's what you do to animals to control them.

Another reference in the Psalms concerning horses, concerning their behavior in relationship to how that fits into our lives now:

Psalms 7:9: “O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous, for the righteous **God tries the hearts and reins.**”

If God tried your reins... In other words, do you have with the Holy Spirit the control of God? Jesus said, 'The Churches ought to know and remember that I, Jesus, am the One Who tries the reins and the heart to give to every man according to his works' (Rev. 2). How are your reins? If God picked up the reins of your life:

- Is He going to find you a bucking bronco?
- Is He going to find you a stubborn mule?
- Is He going to find you a wild ass in the wilderness?

**or**

- Is He going to find you ready?
- Is He going to find you willing?
- Is He going to find you working?

- Is He going to find you plowing?
- Is He going to find you struggling to pull that weight and that load?

—regardless of your circumstances! See why that was used. It's so fantastic! What an analogy! What a beautiful picture that that is for us.

David says, Psalm 26:1: "Judge me, O LORD..." Didn't he say that we'll have the sterner judgment? *Yes, indeed!* See how that ties in. The Word of God fits together, always fits together beautifully.

"...for I have walked in my integrity... [which is really God's integrity] ... I have trusted also in the LORD without wavering. Examine me, O LORD, and prove me... [test me] ...try my reins and my heart... [not saying how good I am, how great I am God] ...for Your loving kindness is before my eyes; and I have walked in Your Truth" (vs 1-3).

He's taunting God here 'to test me to see how good I am.' No! But 'O God help me to walk in Your ways and let that be the test whether I am walking in Your ways.'

Is your heart and your mind submissive and yielded to God? If it is, don't let any man leverage that to himself and take it from you, but let your heart and your reins:

- be supple
- be controlled
- be yielded
- be directed by the Spirit of God

That's what it's saying here.

Psalm 139:1 talks much about the same thing here; this is where David says: "O LORD, You have searched me and have known me.... [How? *By trying the reins and the heart!*] ...You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thoughts afar off. You measure my going about and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways, for there is **not a word on my tongue**, but, lo, O LORD, You know it altogether" (vs 1-4).

Now that's why it's so important that we control our tongues, very important. We're going to see some other things about our tongue and the use of it as we go through the entire third chapter of James.

David talks about how he was made, v 13: "For You have possessed my reins; You have knit me together in my mother's womb." He's saying, 'God has that control over me my whole life, even from conception.' You think about that. Be sure and read and study all the rest of Ps. 139. Absolutely marvelous where he says:

Verse 14: "I will praise You, for **I am awesomely and wonderfully made...**"

Yes, you are made in the image of God. Ps. 8:5<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup> says that you have been made a 'little lower than Elohim'; *that means God!* You are made a little lower than God, not just the angels. It's true you are made lower than the angels, but there it's talking about Elohim; a little lower than God, because that is your potential to become a very member of the Family of God. That's why it's very important that we let God help us, guide us, lead us, direct us and *that we obey Him*; just like we would require horses to obey us had we had them tamed and broken and with the bit in their mouth:

- so that they can work
- so that they can perform
- so that they can do fantastic and wonderful things

And they can be trained to do wonderful things, but the same thing is true with our human nature and behavior.

- with the Spirit of God *the untamed can be tamed*
- with the Spirit of God *that which is unruly can be controlled*
- with the Spirit of God *we can take that which is wild and direct it into direct action* toward growing and overcoming and working toward the Kingdom of God in faith, through the Spirit of God

Again James draws the analogy here by using ships. Why use ships?

James 3:4: "Consider also *that* ships, being so large, and being driven by strong winds, are turned about by a very small rudder, wherever the will of the one who is steering may decide [for himself]." Now I translated it that way because it reflects quite a few things.

Let's understand about ships. It says here, "...being so large..." What are ships made to do? They are made to carry people! They are made to carry burdens! Let's carry the analogy a little further.

- your life equals the boat or ship
- the sea equals the world in which we live
- the wind is the power or the force that moves your life

We find in Rev. 13:17, first of all, the beast that comes up out of the sea, the woman that is standing upon many waters and those many waters are peoples and nations and multitudes and tongues. *That is the world!* The power that directs your life:



- Is it the power of God Who is filling your sails?

or

- Is it the power of Satan who is filling your sails?

Eph. 2 talks about the power of Satan filling your sails, because he is ‘the prince of the power of the air,’ *if* you are not letting the power of God fill your sails. So, it’s quite an analogy that he has here. It’s really apropos in what we are studying and then we will see that there are going to be storms in life.

- Don’t we talk about the storms of life?
- Don’t we talk about the waves of things that come along in this society?
- *Sure we do!*

Ephesians 2:1: “Now, you were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit...” (vs 1-2).

The one that has that power of the air! So in this analogy, is Satan filling your sails? And if he is, where is your port of call going to be? Life is just like the ocean, there are going to be smooth parts and there will be tempestuous parts. There are going to be stormy parts. There are going to be catastrophes, which you could liken to a hurricane. But nevertheless, that’s all a part of life.

So here’s the “...prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working... [or inner working] ...within the children of disobedience; among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest *of the world*” (vs 2-3). That’s why he uses the analogy here of ships. There is so much to be learned from that.

- How is your ship?
- Do you have leaks in it?
- Are you maintaining it?

And if you are on the ocean you have to make sure that every once in a while you get it up on dry dock and you scrap off the barnacles and you paint it, maintain it, repair the sails, fix the ropes, get all pulleys and all of these things together. All of those analogies fit and you could probably go on and on with this analogy as applied to human life and what we are doing.

Let’s see that this also applies in the book of Matthew, and see where this same thing is used in the very life of the disciples and is a witness that Jesus did for the disciples. We’ll see two accounts of

this, and this is fantastic. In reading this I want you to mentally put yourself into the boat with the disciples and they’re in a storm; in a smaller boat, if you have waves four or five feet high and the boat is loaded down with all of the disciples.

Matthew 8:23: “And when He entered into the ship, His disciples followed Him. Now a great tempest suddenly arose in the sea...” (vs 23-24).

Who do you suppose stirred this up? Who was after Jesus wherever He went? *Satan the devil!* He stirred up the storm. ‘Boy, let’s get them with this storm. Let’s sink that ship and drown the Son of man and kill all of the disciples. We’ll nip this Christianity in the bud before it ever gets a start.’ So, here came this tremendous storm.

“...so great that the ship was being covered by the waves...” (v 24). Coming over the top of it. Now you want to have a helpless feeling? Wow! That is it! The waves coming over the top of the ship and its open and then things coming in there.

“...but He was sleeping. And His disciples came to *Him* and awoke Him, saying, ‘Lord, save us! We are perishing.’ And He said to them, ‘Why are you afraid, O *you* of little faith?’?...” (vs 24-26). *If you knew and understood who I really was, it wouldn’t matter if I was awake or asleep.*

“...Then He arose... [notice this lesson that He taught them]: ... *and* rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm” (vs 24-26).

And here’s another analogy. We all like to have smooth sailing. We all like to have life calm. Who alone can give that? *God can!* Who alone can bring us out of the storms of life into the safety of the calmness of God’s way? *Jesus Christ!* Again, tremendous analogies that are here for us. Absolutely tremendous!

Verse 27: “But the men were amazed, saying, ‘What kind *of man*... [or manner of man] ...is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?’” That’s why this analogy is used here.

Let’s see another account relating to faith and the sea and the boat and the storm and walking toward Christ and all of that.

Matthew 14:22: “And immediately Jesus compelled His disciples to enter the ship and go before Him to the other side, while He dismissed the multitude.” He sent them off ahead of time and they didn’t know how He was going to join them.

Verse 23: “And after dismissing the multitude, He went up into the mountain apart to pray; and when evening came, He was there alone. But the ship was now in *the* middle of the sea, being tossed by the waves, because the wind was contrary.

Now in *the* fourth watch of the night...” (vs 23-25).

Jesus was up there praying all night. The fourth watch would be what we would consider from three in the morning until six in the morning; the fourth watch of the night. Here it was just before dawn. Here are all the disciples out there rowing, working hard, all night, can't make any progress.

Do you feel that way sometimes in your life; that you're out here working as a Christian, you're doing all you can—you're not making any progress? It's just like you're rowing against the wind. You make a little progress and the wind pushes you back. And you row and you row and the water is coming in your face and the wind is blowing. You got all these trials. You got all these things pushing in on you. You're rowing and you're rowing and not making any progress. It seems like you're about ready to be exhausted.

Verse 25: “Now in *the* fourth watch of the night, Jesus went to them walking on the sea.” That which is impossible with men *is possible with God!* God can intervene and help you in those circumstances. All your work, all your labor, all your effort seems to be to nothing. Why? *Because you are not looking to Christ!* That's why! You're out here battling this problem, out here battling this storm and rowing and rowing yourself to a frazzle and then all of a sudden you come to yourself and you say, ‘Ah, I need to go to Christ.’ And that's what Peter did.

Verse 26: “And when the disciples saw Him... [walking on the water] ...walking on the sea, they were troubled and said ‘It is an apparition!’... [it's a spirit, a demon] ...And they cried out in fear.... [‘O God, help us!'] ...But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘Be of good courage; *it is I*. Do not be afraid’” (vs 26-27).

With this analogy, think of all the tempestuous problems and the foaming of the sea and the roaring of the wind and your exhaustion from working and Jesus said, “...Be of good courage; *it is I*. Do not be afraid.” You can take that as a lot of comfort in your life, regardless of your circumstances.

- if it's health
- if it's a loved one
- if it's old age
- if it's weakness
- if it's a job problem
- if it's an employment problem

—whatever it is—there is nothing that overwhelms Christ. That's the whole lesson here. He said, ‘Be of good cheer “...*it is I*. Do not be afraid.”

Verse 28: “Then Peter answered Him *and*

said, ‘Lord, if it is You, bid me to come to You upon the waters.’ And He said, ‘Come.’ And after climbing down from the ship...” (vs 28-29). It took a certain amount of guts on Peter's part to even ask the question and an awful lot of guts to even start down.

“...Peter walked upon the waters to go to Jesus” (v 29). There are many times we are going along and we lose faith and BOOM! we do the same thing as Peter.

Verse 30: “But when he saw *how* strong the wind *was*... [the boisterous wind] ...he became afraid; and *as he* was beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, ‘Lord, save me!’”

There are so many times we get ourselves into these positions. It's kind of like walking on the water, as it were, but we could say today: walking on the edge, walking on the brink between those things we know are of faith and those things we know we ought not be doing. And when we finally realize that this whole thing is going to overwhelm us, we say, ‘Lord, save me!’ And what happens? *The Lord intervenes and saves in His grace and His mercy and kindness!*

Verse 31: “And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, ‘O *you* of little faith, why did you doubt?’” There are also many analogies you can have here:

- Are you holding onto the hand of Jesus?
- Are you having the faith of Jesus?
- Are you looking to Him?
- Are you walking on the water thinking, ‘it's not too deep. I can make it’?
- What if the waves come up and the bottom finally falls off?
- How many times have you gone
- swimming and you've been walking out and all of a sudden there is a drop off?

I remember one time we were baptizing a woman up in northern California in the Smith River. That river has banks and big boulders. It is pretty swift, because the lay of the land is pretty steep, sloping toward the ocean. So here we are—we're going to baptize this woman. Now the Smith River is cold, really cold! So, we put on our waders, another minister and I, and we went out there in the Smith River to baptize her. I was the one standing at the head, because the other minister was the one who was doing the baptizing and I was assisting him. We made the mistake of baptizing the woman down current, instead of up current. Well, when we put her down the current started taking her away. All of a sudden we had to step out to rescue her from getting carried away going down the Smith River.

We stepped out and plunk, went down in, and all of a sudden our wading boots all filled up with water. What a near disaster that was! We can be thankful that God was in it and didn't let her go down stream and we didn't slip under the water and all that sort of thing. There are going to be times in your lives when it's going to be like that. You come to your senses, you have the faith, the wind stops, the trial is over.

Verse 33: "And those in the ship came and worshiped Him, saying, 'You are truly the Son of God.'" I guess so! Just remember that in relationship to your life and your trials and your boat and your sail and your wind and all the storms that you go through.

I want to tell you a couple of other stories since we are right here with this. I want to relate, if you have ever seen the movie Papillon starring Steve McQueen and Dustin Hoffman. It's a good example of judgment without mercy. They were crooks. They committed whatever they committed, sent to the French penal colony of Guyana in South America. Right next to that is the Devil's Island. If you are not too bad you go to Guyana and you are really bad then you go to the Devil's Island.

Well, needless to say, the whole story of Papillon centered around how they were put there in these unmerciful conditions: in the jungle, in the heat, in the mud, in the slop, in the mire, in the leeches, with these cruel taskmasters with whips. They had chains and leg irons. Their food was wretched and rotten. The most miserable conditions you could think of in the heat of the jungle, with all of the bugs, mosquitoes, snakes, crocodiles and everything you could think of. They had to slop out there and cut this hard wood in the jungle and without any of the tools that we have today to get any of that; work and labor.

They devised a way to escape; they escaped and got caught, and that put them in solitary for two years. It showed Steve McQueen in there, in solitary and you talk about judgment without mercy! What cruel and terrible things were done! He could not talk to anyone; he couldn't see anyone. They were fed through a little hole in the wall. They got the most wretched and awful food. One of his friends sent him the half coconut; where if he ate that he wouldn't get as run down being in solitary confinement there. He only could take five steps, five steps, five steps; that was it.

Finally, they got caught with the coconut and then he was asked to tell who it was and they had what they called prisoner show yourself and he opened up a little cubicle like that and you stick your head out and he was caught with one of these things; one of these rods right on his throat and saying, 'All

right, you tell who gave that to you.' He wouldn't tell, so then he was given six months with no light, half rations and he grubbed and he lived on millipedes, centipedes, cockroaches, slugs, whatever came in there. And the half ration was mostly just wretched, rotten soup and slop. He almost gave in before that six months of darkness and he was going to tell who did it. He said, 'I want to tell the warden, I want to tell the warden,' and then they came out prisoner show yourself so he stuck his head out and he looked and he says—he changed his mind, and he says—'I really wanted to tell you but I forgot. I forgot, I forgot!' Pitiful, *pitiful*, **pitiful!** BAM! He was back in there in that solitary confinement.

Finally he served his two years and he got out and then he was able to go and work and recover. And they took him to the infirmary and he got his health back and everything. Then he tried to escape again and got caught again, and this time five years solitary confinement—same thing. Then it showed at the end his five years were up and the warden came out and said, 'Prisoner show yourself,' and it showed him as an old man with gray hair and everything. 'Now your five years is up.' So then, he sent him to Devil's Island and there is no way off Devil's Island.

I felt so sorry for the man, the way that it was pictured and everything and he finally figured out a way how to escape from Devil's Island. He would go out and sit and watch the waves, count the waves, and finally figured out that every seventh wave—it would carry him out if he got into the water. He figured out how he could do this with coconuts and make a big coconut raft. He threw that down, jumped in the water and he drifted out and got over to mainland. He was the only one to escape Devil's Island! Boy, what a trial that was! And just thinking of all the things that he went through, and that's right when I was preparing for this sermon.

And then one other story I've got to tell you. It is the historical account in 1916 of Captain Shackleton<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup> and his expedition to Antarctica.

You talk about terrible and extreme conditions! They went down to Antarctica and they didn't get out in time and their ship got frozen in. They had three-foot thick wooden hull. It was fierce, it was terrible, 100-degrees below zero, 100mph winds. They were able to have the still photographer take pictures of it, and some of it was moving pictures, too. It showed how the ice finally crushed the ship and they had to get up and get out of it. They had been there 16 months in Antarctica. They survived the whole winter. Then they had to set out with their dog teams and they were going to go to Elephant Island. So, they got on this big ice raft, as it were, this big iceberg, which was floating up that

way. They had their dogs, they had their boats and everything. They finally got up to where they'd get to Elephant Island and it was so warm that the iceberg was falling; everything was falling apart from all around them.

You talk about a trial in life! Everything falling out from underneath you! So, they had to get into their boats and they tried to go to Elephant Island, because they knew there were supplies there. They couldn't make Elephant Island so they had to regroup. They were then going to go to St. George's Island. It showed the wind and the waves; tremendous 50-foot waves in this cold, cold, miserable, God forsaken place!

They finally got to St. George's Island, but they landed on the wrong side, so Captain Shackleton and two others had to climb this unclimbable mountain. They finally got to the top of it exhausted! They couldn't see down the glacier because of the cloud covering that was there. They left the other people there saying, 'We'll be back and get you. You take care of yourself.' They got up there and the three of them tied themselves together and decided just to slide down the glacier. They slid down the glacier a couple of thousand feet and untied themselves and they found themselves just within a short distance of the whaling station at St. George's Island. Shackleton and the two men walked in and said, 'Hello, I am Captain Shackleton. Can you send a boat to rescue my men?'

Everyone had thought the whole expedition had died out. Here it was a total of 18 months! Now you talk about difficulties and problems! Then it took them two months to come around and get those men that were left on the other side of St. George's Island. They were all alive and they all lived!

- when we think about our life
- when we think about our problems
- when we think about the difficulties we are going through

then we need to go back and read this here and understand that our lives are not much different than anybody else's.

Liken your life as it were to a boat or to a ship, and let the wind of God, the Spirit of God—because the wind of God comes from Acts 2—that 'the Holy Spirit came as a mighty rushing wind.'

***Let that be the wind that fills the sails of your life, to blow you to the port and let that port be the Kingdom of God.*** So, this is why James uses horses and uses boats.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) James 3:1-5
- 2) 1 Timothy 3:1-11
- 3) 2 Timothy 1:6-12
- 4) 2 Timothy 2:1-4
- 5) Ephesians 6:10-11
- 6) 2 Timothy 2:5-10, 14-15
- 7) James 3:2
- 8) James 2:10-11
- 9) James 3:2
- 10) Revelation 12:10
- 11) Romans 7:14-25
- 12) Romans 8:1-2
- 13) 1 John 1:5-10
- 14) 1 John 2:1-2
- 15) James 3:2-3
- 16) Jeremiah 5:7-9
- 17) Psalm 32:9
- 18) Psalm 7:9
- 19) Psalm 26:1-3
- 20) Psalm 139:1-4, 13-14
- 21) James 3:4
- 22) Ephesians 2:1-3
- 23) Matthew 8:23-27
- 24) Matthew 14:22-31, 33

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Philippians 2; 3
- Revelation 2
- Psalm 8:5
- Revelation 13:17
- Acts 2

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## Epistle of James VII The Power of the Tongue

Fred R. Coulter

James 3:1: “My brethren, do not many of you become teachers, knowing that **we** will receive more severe judgment.” The key thing here we need to remember is that James includes himself; he doesn’t say ‘you teachers’; he says *we*!

Verse 2: “Because **we** frequently offend... [sin] ...everyone of us...”—*to miss the mark*. If you offend in one point of the Law, you’ve transgressed the whole Law. The word ‘offend’ is the same word *as sin*. This is what he’s talking about. He’s talking about the Christian’s perception of sin, how you feel inside. Not the manifestations of what it is to other people. It may not be a sin to people in the world, but it is a sin in your mind. That’s what we’re talking about here.

“...If anyone does not offend in what he says, this one *is* a perfect man *and is* able also to hold in check the whole body. Remember, we put bits into horses’ mouths in order that they may obey us, and we direct their entire bodies. Consider also *that* ships, being so large, and being driven by strong winds, are turned about by a very small rudder, wherever the will of the one who is steering may decide [for himself]” (vs 2-4)—indicative of a middle-voice verb; this is something that he did himself.

- your life is like the boat
- the sea is the world
- the wind is the power or the force

—whether it is the power of God’s Spirit (Acts 2); the Holy Spirit came as a ‘mighty rushing wind’ *or* the power from the ‘prince of the power of the air.’

Verse 5: “In the same way also, **the tongue is a little member, but it boasts great things**. See how large a forest is set ablaze by a little fire.”

Just this year we had the fires in the east Oakland hills. What an awesome firestorm that was. It was started by a little, teeny fire that was left unattended. The wind came along. How are rumors of the tongue born? *Almost like the wind!* There’s a saying in Proverbs: ‘a little bird shall carry it.’ Today we have the great assistance of telephones. So, whatever is said can be just taken right out very quickly. “...how large a forest is set ablaze by a little fire.”

Once these things get going, they create their own wind, they create their own power as it were. Some of the firemen look at these fires as if it’s a personality that these fires have, because

they’re totally unruly. You can be standing in one place, as a fireman putting out a fire, and the fire will leap clear over you and set another building or house or trees ablaze. The next thing you know you’re caught right up in the middle of it. This is very apropos when he says, “...See how large a forest is set ablaze by a little fire.”

Verse 6: “And **the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness**.... [that’s where it begins] ...So has the tongue been set among our members, *the one member that* defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of life, and is set on fire by Gehenna. Now then, every species of animals and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But the tongue no human being is able to tame; *it is* an unrestrainable evil, full of death-dealing poison” (vs 6-8).

“And **the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness**...” Let’s see what Jesus said about the tongue. Isn’t it with the tongue that you express what comes to your mind? ***Sin begins in the mind!*** *The tongue is that vehicle which expresses it!* That’s why he says, ‘Brethren, we’re all constantly *missing the mark* or *sinning!*’ If you could, how many conversations would you go back and reclaim? Or, if you had conversations recorded on a recording, how many of them would you like to run through the magnetic eraser and get rid of as never existing? *You can! That’s called repentance!* The operation of the magnet is called *forgiveness through the blood of Christ!*

Jesus talks about the tongue and the sin and forgiveness and the lack thereof. I’m constantly amazed how much that James’ epistle reflects the teaching and thinking of Matthew. Why do you suppose that is? *I think that it is because Matthew was written first!* It is known that Matthew probably was the only Gospel written in Hebrew. Very possibly that was so. It was written to the Jews in the synagogues who were following Christ.

Matthew 12:31: “Because of this, I [Christ] say to you, every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men...” That comes from the tongue, from the mind. I’m covering this so we understand ***there is hope!*** The way we control our tongues more is to kind of get them out there so far that we, many times, step on them; then it hurts. There are many times I feel like that.

Unfortunately, the ones whom we use this on most of all are the ones we love. It’s sort of a

natural human proclivity. I won't say hypocrisy, nor double-standard—though it may appear like that—that sometimes we treat people that we don't know—as well as we know our family—on the surface, better than we do our own family.

Why? *Because family arguments are for the family!* That's why! *Family difficulties are for the family!* So, we do make this differential between the family and other people. However, when it gets to the point that it is noticeable to you or to someone in your family that you're nicer to other people than you are to your own family, then you need to stop and take stock and re-group and begin asking God to help you do what you need to do in your family, because after all, they're the ones that you love. What's that old song? *You Always Hurt the One You Love!* That's the way it ends up.

- Think of that in relationship to God!
- Think of that in relationship to Christ!

Does God love us? *Yes!* 'For God so loved the world...' That is in all of *its un-glorious evil!* '...that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall have everlasting life.'

Do we hurt God? *Yes, we do!* That's what He's talking about here, *blaspheming!* What was the greatest hurt that God took from the tongue of men and the action of Satan? *The crucifixion of Christ!* So, you see how in-depth that this Epistle of James really is!

You can take all of these words, and you can say, 'All right, let's apply these Scriptures to the judgment, condemnation and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and remember what Jesus said when He was on the cross. What was the first thing He said when He was crucified and that cross was lifted up? ***'Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing!'*** That's a tremendous amount of love, but that is also forgiving a tremendous sin and heinous crime. Maybe with that you can understand why it is so against God to be self-righteous. Just remember, ***'Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing!'***

Verse 31: "...every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men **except the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit**; that shall not be forgiven to men." This is total rejection of the Holy Spirit. This is not some simple, little thing that a man does. This is by choice! Total blasphemy against God! It says the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit comes from God the Father and you are rejecting the work of God the Father.

Verse 32: "And whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but

whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in the coming *age*. Either make the tree good and the fruit good, or make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt; for a tree is known by its fruit" (vs 32-33).

The whole purpose of the book of James is for us to clearly see *how to lineup our lives and our conduct according to the Word of God*; to let the Word of God come as the 'sword of the Lord' and prick our consciences, for us to realize we've got a long way to go in overcoming our own human nature and our own internal hypocrisies.

I know it's having that affect on me, just personally, as I go through and translate, read, study, prepare, and then bring the sermons, I'm speaking an awful lot to myself. And especially when you go back and consider when he says *we*—he's including himself. If the half-brother of Jesus Christ—who saw Jesus grow up; who rejected Jesus until after He was crucified, and then Jesus appeared to him—includes himself right in there with all of the rest of us of all of humanity, that's a pretty powerful statement by James.

Verse 33: "Either make the tree good and the fruit good, or make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt; for a tree is known by its fruit. Offspring of vipers, how are you able to speak good things, being evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings out good things; and the wicked man out of the wicked treasure brings out wicked things. But I say to you, for every idle word that men may speak, they shall be held accountable in *the* day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned" (vs 33-37).

How then do we find a way out of this difficulty? Cut the tongue out? *No! That won't stop the mind!* That may stop the effect! That's why we are to let the Spirit of God enter in. Remember, to the Laodiceans Jesus said, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock. And if 'any man will open I will come into him and sup with him.' This means we need to draw closer to Christ. And the model daily prayer is: 'Forgive us our sins.' That's on a daily basis. All of that will be covered by the blood of Jesus Christ; therefore, you will not be condemned. Rom. 8 says very clearly that *if* we have the Spirit of God, and *if* we are yielding to God, 'there is no condemnation.' That's what we need to keep in mind.

James 3:6: "And the **tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness**. So has the tongue been set among our members, *the one member that* defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of life, and is set on fire by Gehenna."

Let's go to the book of Psalms and see some of the Psalms in dealing with the tongue. It's also by the use of the tongue that *conversion* comes; if we confess our sins, talking to God. If we confess that Jesus is Lord (Rom. 10), and believe from the heart that He as the Savior, died, was crucified and resurrected, we shall be saved. Of course, there's a lot that goes behind that to make that up.

An excellent example of the use of the tongue, good and bad; Psalm 5:1 "Give ear to my words, O LORD; consider my meditation." That's where the words start. That's why the Psa. 1 starts out: 'Blessed is the man that meditates on the Word day and night'

Verse 2: "Hearken to the voice of my cry, my King and my God, for to You do I pray." The most important thing we can do with our tongue and our mind is pray to God. Not be like the hypocrites and stand on the corner and make long prayers 'to be seen of men.'

Verse 3: "My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning I will direct my prayer to You, and I will look up, for You are not a God that has pleasure in wickedness; nor shall evil dwell with You. The boasters shall not stand in Your sight. You hate all workers of iniquity. You shall destroy those who speak lies... [corrupt sayings] ...the LORD abhors the bloody and deceitful man" (vs 3-6). Of course, then, that's with the tongue again.

What's that old Indian saying, 'White man speak with forked tongue.' That is true! Talks about in 1-Tim. 3 that a minister is not to be 'double-tongued'; which ties in with one of the verses where he's not to give a blessing on one hand and turn around and give a curse on the other hand—being double-tongued or political.

Verse 7: "But I, in the abundance of Your loving kindness, I will come into Your house... [ties in with James 3] ...I will bow down in Your fear toward Your Holy temple. Lead me, O LORD, in Your righteousness..." (vs 7-8).

That's the 'trying of the reins and the heart'; to *lead* us, that we are conquered by God. We are not a wild horse or a mule out here in the wilderness any more, but *we are directed by God, going in the direction that He wants us to go!*

"...because of my enemies; make Your way straight before my face, for there is no Truth in their mouth; their inward part is destruction; their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue. Hold them guilty, O God; let them fall by their own counsels..." (vs 8-10).

He's not praying down a curse, that he's

saying, 'God, I want you to curse these people.' He's saying, 'O God, destroy them.' How? "...let them fall by their own counsels..." In other words, let them get trapped in their own devices. How many times do we get trapped in our own devices and stupidity?

"...cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled against You. But let all who put their trust in You rejoice; let them always shout for joy... [there's another use of the tongue: joy and happiness] ...because You defend them. And let those who love Your name exult in You, for You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; with favor You will surround him as with a shield" (vs 10-12).

Psalm 50:16: "But to the wicked God says, 'What right have you to declare My statutes, and to take up My covenant in your mouth?'" Direct condemnation of those who take a *form* of Christianity and create a 'religion.' How many people have taken the name of Christ?

Verse 17: "Yea, you hate to be taught, and you cast My words behind you." We don't like this Sabbath, we'll get rid of this. 'We don't like this clean and unclean meat, I like my pork—we'll get rid of that. We love our Christmas tree, so we've got have Christmas—we'll take Christmas and we'll put Christ in it.' It won't work!

Verse 18: "When you saw a thief, then you were pleased to be with him, and you have taken part with adulterers. You give your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit" (vs 18-19). See how these things do. Look at all of these 'garbage' newspapers that come along: *The Star*, *The Enquirer*—all of that. A lot of those 'frame deceit.'

Verse 20: "You sit; you speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's son. These things you have done, and I have kept silence; you thought that I was like yourself, but I will rebuke you, and set them in order before your eyes. Now, consider this, **you who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver**" (vs 20-22).

There are those things that have to be considered. That's why repentance is so important. That's why being focused in on the Word of God and the Spirit of God is so important; so we can control our tongues. Hopefully, by the time it comes to the day that we exhaust our last, we will have made some accomplishment that way. I could look back when I was a teenager that I had a very vile mouth and temper. My mother can tell some hair-raising stories about the villainy of my mouth and blasphemous vituperations coming out of it. When I was trying to work on my motorcycle and I'm not a mechanic—oh, bad! bad!

This is actually a prophecy of Christ as they were entrapping Him in their web of lies, Psalm 57:4: “My soul is among lions...” Those are all the Sadducees and Pharisees and scribes and the demons behind them.

“...I lie among those who breathe out fire, the sons of men whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword” (v 4). Sometimes you might feel that way in the world.

Psalm 109:2: “For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me... [prophecy of Christ] ...they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. And they surrounded me with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause” (vs 2-3). There is the way the tongue is, setting on a course of fire, the fire of hell.

James 3:7: “Now then, every species of animals and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.”

When we do that, we are forcing them into a behavior that we want. We entice them—not by beating, but by feeding. You’ll notice that if you go to Sea World, or something like that, even these big giant whales—the killer whales—every time they do something they’re rewarded. You can’t get an animal to do it by beating it. You must train it. It may have to have some discipline, some sharp slaps or snaps as it were.

Verse 7: “Now then, every species of animals and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. **But the tongue no human being is able to tame...**” (vs 7-8).

- apart from God
- apart from God’s Spirit
- apart from God’s way

***You cannot of your own self tame your own nature!*** Cannot do it!

Just like a wild animal, when a human being is running wild and refuses to be tamed, refuses to submit to direction, then the only thing you can do is let it run wild. In the case of human beings, until they reach the bottom! They have to reach the bottom! Lots of people like to intervene and in some way stop human beings from reaching the bottom, because after all, we want to help.

I know a man who had a terrible, terrible drinking problem; absolutely terrible drinking problem! Everyone tried to help him. His church tried to help him; tried to get him in on this rehabilitation program, tried to help his wife to help him and he’d still go out and drink. He’d still go out and get drunk and couldn’t stop. Finally, he ended

up with three DUIs. He finally had to sit in jail. When he was sitting in jail, the thing happened, which was necessary. It’s just like the tale of the ‘prodigal son.’ ***When he ‘came to himself.’*** That’s what he did; he *came to himself*. Now he’s out, he’s sober, he’s living his life properly, just got a job; but he had to hit the bottom! He had to *come to himself*.

It’s just like any wild animal out there, until they come to the point that they are trainable—not that an animal makes up his mind. I’m sure they are certain choices; certain submissive instincts that an animal must do. You have some animals that, by nature, are easy to train and break—I know this with horses. You have some that are bucking broncos all their lives. You can’t trust them. Don’t walk behind them, even though you put a saddle on them and ride them, don’t walk behind them! BAM! They’ll kick you. If you ever get kicked by a horse, that’s pretty bad!

Here’s a little article by a man, and he was saying about how he had to control himself, speaking of taming animals:

There was an old man who often complained of pain and weariness in the evening, as many of us do. A friend asked him why he complained so. The old man replied, ‘Alas, I have everyday so much to do. I have two falcons to tame, two hares to keep from running away, two hawks to manage, a serpent to confine, a lion to chain, and a sick man to tend and wait upon.’

‘Why, he must be joking!’ said his friend. ‘Surely no man can have all those things to do at once.’

He said, ‘Indeed, I’m not joking! But what I’ve told you is the sad, sober truth, because the two falcons are ***my two eyes, which I must diligently guard.*** The two hares (rabbits) are ***my two feet, which I must keep from walking I the ways of sin.*** The two hawks are ***my two hands, which I must train to work,*** that I may be able to provide for myself and my brethren in need. The serpent is ***my tongue, which I always bridle, lest I speak unseemly.*** The lion is ***my heart, which I have to continue to fight lest evil things come out of it.*** And the sick man is ***my whole body, which is always needing my watchfulness and care.***’

Good description of human nature! That’s why this analogy fits so nicely, as far as likening it to human beings. We have to ask ourselves: What is our nature? Some are more gentle than others. We all have the thing we need to do to figure to get



straightened out.

Proverbs 18—here is the power of the tongue; this is true, and I tell you the hardest challenge to do is to try and use your words in a reasonable way with people who are unreasonable. *That's the hardest thing to do, especially when they're doing wrong!* The only thing I can say is when you have situations like that the only thing you can do is pray, and ask God to help you. There are times when I go to God and I say, 'Oh, God, help me! I just don't know what to do or say! There will be times in your life when it's like that, especially when you've offended someone; then it becomes even worse and more difficult.

Proverbs 18:21 **"Death and life are in the power of the tongue..."** That's why the death penalty; 'I sentence you to death,' says the judge. That's the power of death. 'I commute your sentence,' says the governor. *That is life!* God says, 'The wages of sin is death! ***But the gift of God is eternal life.***' All comes from the mouth of God.

Verse 21: "Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue, and those who love it shall eat the fruit of it." Immediately this reminds you of gossiping people and talebearers.

Verse 8: "The words of a talebearer *are* as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly." That's how words can affect people; go right into their heart, mind and feelings.

Let's keep that in mind. There are some people who need sharp words. Jude tells us how we are to handle some of these things.

(go to the next track)

This is when the Church was right smack in the middle of the power struggle between the forces of Satan trying to tear the Church apart. This is probably right at the beginning of what we call the Catholic Church today, the very division that occurred within the Church when this took place. There was this fight right within the Church, right absolutely within the Church!

Jude is the other half-brother of Jesus. The Hebrew pronunciation of it would be 'Judas.'

Jude 16: "These are complainers *and* critics, who are walking after their own personal lusts..." That's what they were doing in the Church. Have we been a church situation where we have experienced some of this kind of thing? *Absolutely!*

"...while their mouths are speaking great swelling words, flattering persons for the sake of advantage.... [political chicanery!] ...But you, beloved, remember the words that were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

because they said to you that in *the* last time there would be mockers, who would be selfishly walking according to their own ungodly lusts. These are the ones who cause division; *they are* psychic, not having *the* Spirit of God. But you, beloved, *be* building up yourselves on your most Holy faith, praying in *the* Holy Spirit, *so that* you keep yourselves in *the* love of God *while* you are personally awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Now on the one hand, show mercy to those individuals who are doubting" (vs 16-22).

Now, here's how to handle the different people and different situation and the use of the tongue. Some sharply, some meekly, some with authority, some with coercion and begging, making a difference; *have compassion.*

Verse 23: "But on the other hand, save others with fear..." You just tell them, 'Your life is going down the tubes and you're going straight to hell.' Sometimes you have to use those kinds of words.

"...snatching *them* out of the fire, hating even the garment *that has been* defiled by the flesh" (vs 23).

'You're going to ruin your life; look where you're going.' What is the last thing you can do to get someone's attention? That's what he's saying! Here these problems are going on in the Church and we don't all go around and hold our hands in a prayerful motion and just be the ideal of meekness. We are to be meek before God, that is true; but there are some situations that have to be handled with power and authority. They have to be handled differently.

On the other hand, we've lived through the experience where church ministers, that's all they ever used was power and authority and beat up the congregation! This is in the extreme case where there was a division going right on within the Church, on a mass scale in most congregations.

Verse 24: "Now to Him Who [Christ] is able to keep them from falling, and to bring *them* into the presence of His own glory, blameless in exceeding joy, to *the* only wise God our Savior, *be the* glory and greatness, *the* might and authority, even now, and into all the ages of eternity. Amen" (vs 24-25).

That's one powerful epistle! When I got in there and I really understood what was going on in the book of Jude, that is something! ***With the tongue we have all that in the power of the tongue!***

James 3:9: "With it... [our tongue] ...we bless God *the* Father, and with it we ourselves curse people who are made in *the* likeness of God." This is

height of hypocrisy! That's what He wants us to get rid of; let's understand that. We all understanding what 'blessing God is.' The Greek there is *to eulogize or speak well of*. Where is 'cursing' people, the word 'curse' here is *to pronounce a curse down from God on other people*. That's what that means.

This doesn't mean you're out there and your tongue slips and you have a swear word once in a while. This means you're actually coming before God, blessing Him and then turning around in the same prayer and are asking God to bring down a curse upon other people. The Jews did this in what was later called 'the minim.' The 'minim' was a benediction that everyone in the synagogue had to pronounce; a curse against Christ, a curse against Christians. If you stumbled one word with the 'minim' in the synagogue, you were thought to be a Christian and kicked out.

You'll understand a little later when we get into some of these things, why it was written to them that they were not to be blaspheming, because that's how then they could be blaspheming to save their little necks, to stand up there and curse. We think that that's unthinkable, but some people do that. We're not be calling down the 'curse of God' upon people; even our enemies. What did David say? *Let them fall by their own devices!* What should our prayer really be? *That God would put it in their minds to repent!* That's what it really should be. That's what it means 'loving our enemies' in the things that we say and do.

Matthew 5:33: "Again, you have heard that it was said to those *in ancient times*, 'You shall not forswear yourself, but you shall perform your oaths to the Lord.'" There were two kinds of oaths:

1. go and ask God to curse, ask God to bless
2. you would swear by God, swear by yourself

Jesus says, v 34: "But I say to you, do not swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet; nor by Jerusalem, because it is *the* city of the great King" (vs 34-35)

So, in either of these cases, if you took a swearing—of blessing or cursing—and invoked any of these things, then it was supposed to be a valid thing. But it's not. He's saying, 'no way.'

Verse 36: "Neither shall you swear by your head, because you do not have the power to make one hair white or black. But let your word be *good*, your "Yes" be yes and your "No" be no; for anything that *is* added to these is from the evil one" (vs 36-37)—because out of the same mouth proceeds blessings and cursings. He's saying these things ought not be so.

Verse 43: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, **love your enemies**, bless those who curse you..." (vs 43-44).

How are you to love your enemies? *You pray for them!* I like the admonition from *Fiddler on the Roof* when the young man came up to the rabbi and said, 'Rabbi, is there a blessing for the Czar?' And the rabbi stroked his beard and looked around a little bit and said, 'Yes, may the Lord bless him and keep him far away from us!' That may be one way to pray for your enemies. Another way is that *you pray that their minds would be changed*.

- your curse is not going to change them
- your anger is not going to work the righteousness of God
- ***But God can change their mind!***

It is such a simple, little thing that you never think of it. That's why when you ask God for grace and favor in other people's eyes, that's what you are doing. You are asking God to put it in their mind. What if you're dealing with someone that really is causing you some problems? Or, you're dealing with someone that is almost inextricable to handle? ***You pray and ask God to help you!*** Maybe God will even change the whole situation. He may even cause you to lose your job, so you get a new boss. You've been asking God to help you with this boss; 'I can't get along with him.' God heard your prayer and then you lose your job and you wonder why you're losing your job. Well, God is answering the prayer. Can He provide another one? *Yes, He can!* And, lo and behold, what happens? *You get a nice boss!*

It also gives us appreciation for what we have. Sometimes we tend to look at so many things from our own perspective—especially if we're going to do without—that we forget to be thankful for what we have. That's why in all things—in prayer and supplication—"let your request be made known to God." Not the 'gimmees,' but that *God's will be done*. Not that you can force your will on someone, but that they have their mind changed because *they choose* to change. Only God can affect that! Sometimes that's pretty hard to do. Sometimes you gnash on your teeth and your tongue. If we literally gnashed on our tongue every time we said something wrong or something, we'd soon not be able to talk; our tongues would be so thick with scar tissue that we couldn't mutter a word. *Pray for them*; that's how you do it!

Verse 44: "...do good to those who hate you..." That's the hardest thing in the world. Did Jesus do good to them that hated Him? *Yes!* He said, 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.' Did He do good to the one that hated Him and Peter

cut off his ear? *Yes! He healed it and put it back on!*

“...and pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you” (v 44). This is the toughest requirement of a Christian. I’ll have to say, *it’s tough!* The most natural inclination is to do as James said, ‘Bless God, then curse your enemies.’ *No!* That’s why James gets right down into your gut! He does! *It forces you to see where you need to change!* The hardest thing to admit is, ‘yes, I need to change.’ You can start by saying, ‘God, I just don’t know, help me!’ That’s where to begin!

Notice what will happen, v 45: “So that you yourselves may be *the* children of your Father Who *is* in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *on the* good, and sends rain on *the* just and *on the* unjust.” God is even merciful to people in the world!

Verse 46: “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?... [from God] ...Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*?” Oh, sure, they all sidle up to the bars—the whores and the whoremongers and drunkards and smoke their cigarettes and tell their dirty jokes and all this sort of thing—they all understand each other; no one’s kidding each other; they love each other; they except each other. We haven’t accomplished too much.

Verse 47 “And if you salute your brethren only, what have you done *that is* extraordinary? Do not the tax collectors practice the same *thing*?”

Oh, yes, we all belong to the same club. If you belong to the club you’re really *it!* I saw a movie where they were depicting one of these social club—I guess it was the Buffalo Club—and I didn’t watch but just a couple of minutes, and they all had one these buffalo things with these buffalo horns on it. As long as you were a ‘brother buffalo’ you were *in like Flynn*. That’s what he’s saying here. It’s not the social club you belong to or the circle of friends that you have. What have you accomplished in life? God, through Christ, said, ‘Forgive them, Father, they know not what they’re doing.’

Verse 48: “Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect.” That’s the whole goal we’re shooting for. James gives us a lot of good stepping-stones along that path, along the way, and *Christ is the way to accomplish it*. These things are brought here to help us to be able to get ourselves in proper order.

What do you do with constructive criticism, when something needs to be brought up? *Well, I’d say pray about it, and just do like the Bible says:* Go to the individual involved and talk it over with them. Who knows, you might find out that that person is really trying to work on that problem. It may or may not be. Maybe they don’t even know anything about

it. Maybe it never even occurred to them. On the other hand, maybe they’re right in the middle and they know exactly what you’re doing. Then you’ll know what the scoop is.

I know that in some churches you don’t dare say anything to the minister. I don’t want any of you to get in a situation where you think you can’t say anything to me. That’s fine, you can! Hey, I’m not perfect; no one is perfect, you’re not perfect and we’re all in this boat together. That’s why James says, ‘Beloved brethren, we’—he’s including himself. He’s not exempting himself from any of this. I know that in some churches they just worship a man more than God.

We have to be careful not to rush in and ‘put holes in someone’s boat or tip it over’ and that kind of thing. That’s true! That’s a good analogy. This is really quite a chapter. It gets to everyone of us personally. And going through and preparing this, it’s gotten to me personally. I’ve got to ask myself:

- What have I said?
- What have I done?
- What am I saying?
- What am I doing?
- How am I going to handle these things?

I stand just as convicted as any other human being with this. This is not some minister sitting up here preaching from the ‘ivory tower of righteousness.’ Human nature is *human nature*; that’s just the way that it is.

Hopefully, with God’s Spirit, we can get a hold of the reins, get the bit in our mouths, get the direction from God and do better. But, I tell you, this book of James is really something! I’m very glad we’re going through it and getting into it. I don’t ever recall doing an in-depth study of the book of James in all the years of being a minister. I look at that and think: how dumb, how stupid, how ignorant! But that’s the way it is. So, we go on and admit it and say let’s learn it, let’s repent and change and grow and go on from there.

I’ll tell you one thing that God will always do: whenever you make a blank statement about a category of people—can be race, sex, age, nationality—my experience is that God is going to put you in contact with someone of those people that you have condemned, which is going to contradict what you’ve said; 99 times out of 100 that will happen! That’s just the *living Word of God* in action, and God’s way and action in your life.

Proverbs 10:20: “The tongue of the righteous *is as* choice silver...” Here’s the goal that we need to have. That we can say the right things, from God’s Spirit, to inspire them to do what they

need to do.

“...the heart of the wicked *is* worth little. The lips of the righteous feed many...” (vs 20-21). If there’s any one motto that a minister or teacher ought to have, here it is right here:

- What are you saying?
- What are you teaching?
- What are you preaching?
- How are you saying it?
- How is it being done?
- Who are you affecting?
- Are you feeding people

or

- Are you spewing out your own ideas?

“...but fools die for lack of wisdom” (v 21). Let’s not be foolish Christians (Matt. 25—parable of the Ten Virgins; five were wise, five were foolish).

I tell you, brethren, studying the Bible is so absolutely fantastic that you can study and go through it. What you need is the Spirit of God to really help keep everything alive and vital and nourishing and powerful, all the time. It’s there and we have to make the effort. Let God’s Word do that for us.

Proverbs 12:17: “*He who speaks truth shows forth righteousness... [showing forth the righteousness of God] ...but a false witness deceit.*” Sometimes in the Proverbs you have to take the verb of the first statement and insert it in the second statement, because the verb is understood from the first to the second.

Verse 18: “There are those who speak like the piercing of a sword...” Sometimes God’s Word is that way, going ‘right down to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit (Heb. 4).

“...but the tongue of the wise heals” (v 18). To help the person: to encourage them, to inspire them.

Verse 19: “The lips of truth shall be established forever, but a lying tongue *is* but for a moment.” Then we get into what James is talking about:

Verse 20: “Deceit *is* in the heart of those who imagine evil, but to counselors of peace *there is* joy.”

If you want to do an auxiliary study just go through the book of Proverbs and list out all of the Proverbs that have to do with *speaking, with the tongue, with righteousness of the tongue, with wickedness of the tongue*. It will really quite a lesson.

Proverbs 15:1: “A soft answer turns away

wrath... [remember that the next time you get stopped for a ticket] ...but grievous words stir up anger.... [if you get them mad at you, look out] ...The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours out foolishness” (vs 1-2). Oh, so true! ***‘The tongue is an unruly evil, who can control it?’***

Verse 3: “The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good. A wholesome tongue *is* a tree of life, but perverseness in it crushes the spirit” (vs 3-4). People can become so perverted in what they think, say and do that it affects their spirit.

James 3:10: “From the same mouth comes out blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so!” We need to change that. He’s saying this is a reality of life; these things ought to be so. We need to be making change in our behavior.

Verse 11: “Does a fountain pour out of the same opening sweet *water* and bitter *water*?” Is it? How many have ever drunk water from a sulfur spring? *It’s like drinking rotten eggs!* If you’ve ever drunk water out of a sulfur spring you’ll know exactly how that is.

I remember the first time, as a kid, my dad said, ‘It’s good for you. There are minerals in this. Don’t worry about the smell, just drink it.’ It was all you could do to drink it and keep your stomach from not spewing it back up. He’s saying here that what God is wanting: ***He wants the inside to change!*** Because the source of the spring or the water is going to be either sweet or bitter.

Verse 12: “My brethren, can a fig tree produce olives, or a vine *produce* figs?....” It’s talking about what is being produced from the roots, the stem, the inside out. Of course, we’re to bring forth fruit.

“...In the same way, no fountain *can* produce salt water and fresh *water*” (v 12).

That’s how they were able to discover the Amazon River. When the Portuguese came down there, they were over 150 miles offshore and they could dip into the ocean and drink fresh water. There was so much water pouring out of the Amazon River that out that far to sea there was fresh water. They were astonished that it took them so long to get to land after they were able to dip out the fresh water. Imagine that, 150 miles out to sea. They knew that was a contradiction. They knew they weren’t in the middle of the ocean. In the middle of the ocean it is just salt water, but now they had fresh water. That’s how Brazil became a colony of the Portuguese. Same way with the fig tree here.

Hopefully *our fruit* is producing better and

better as we go along. We're talking about what comes from the inside out.

Matthew 7:16: "You shall know them by their fruits. They do not gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, do they? In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a corrupt tree produces evil fruit. A good tree cannot produce evil fruit, nor can a corrupt tree produce good fruit. Every tree *that is* not producing good fruit is cut down and is cast into the fire. Therefore, you shall assuredly know them by their fruits" (vs 16-20). So, James is saying exactly the same thing.

John 15 shows that we are to be part of the vine. God the Father is the husbandman, and *we are to bring forth much fruit*. We're to bring forth the proper kind of fruit.

John 15:1: "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. He takes away every branch in Me *that* does not bear fruit; but He cleanses each one that bears fruit, in order that it may bear more fruit" (vs 1-2). That's what it is with any tree, with any vine.

Verse 3: "You are already clean through the word that I have spoken to you. Dwell in Me, and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but only if it remains in the vine, neither *can* you *bear fruit* unless you are dwelling in Me. I am the vine, and you *are* the branches. The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because **apart from Me you can do nothing**" (vs 3-5).

Verse 16: "You yourselves did not choose Me, but I have personally chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go *forth* and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; so that whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He may give you."

James 3:13: "Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him demonstrate his works through good conduct in *the* meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your heart..." (vs 13-14). He was trying to correct this very beginning of this carnal division within the Church.

"...do not boast and lie against the Truth. This wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, sensual *and* demonic; because where bitter envying and selfish ambition *are*, there *is* dissension and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and without hypocrisy. Now *the* fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace" (vs 14-18).

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) James 3:1-6
- 2) Matthew 12:31-37
- 3) James 3:6
- 4) Psalm 5:1-12
- 5) Psalm 50:16-22
- 6) Psalm 57:4
- 7) Psalm 109:2-3
- 8) James 3:7-8
- 9) Proverbs 18:21, 8
- 10) Jude 16-25
- 11) James 3:9
- 12) Matthew 5:33-37, 43-48
- 13) Proverbs 10:20-21
- 14) Proverbs 12:17-20
- 15) Proverbs 15:1-4
- 16) James 3:10-12
- 17) Matthew 7:16-20
- 18) John 15:1-5, 16
- 19) James 3:13-18

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 2
- Romans 8, 10
- Psalm 1
- 1 Timothy 3
- Matthew 25
- Hebrews 4

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## Epistle of James VIII Friend of the World/Enemy of God

Fred R. Coulter

James 4 really becomes very exciting because there are actually ten commandments that James gives, which are hidden right within the fourth chapter of the book of James. I'm sure that you have found—as I have found—that James really gets in there and talks about human nature and behavior and what we say and what we do in compares all of that with our Christian life and what we need to be doing.

James 3:11: “Does a fountain pour out of the same opening sweet *water* and bitter *water*? My brethren, can a fig tree produce olives, or a vine produce figs?.... (vs 11-12). The word ‘produce’ means *to make or create*.

- What do we have here?
- Why does he use this analogy?
- Why does he use this example?

We know obviously, by common sense, that a fig tree is not going to produce olives. But what he's saying in this is so that we have our conduct coordinated with what we are *professing*. James 2 is talking about having a *profession of faith*, but not having *works of faith*. Here he's saying now your talk must equal your walk by what you are producing, because it has to come from *within*.

“...In the same way, no fountain *can* produce salt water and fresh *water*. Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him demonstrate... [prove] ...his works through good conduct in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not boast and lie against the Truth. This wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, sensual... [psychic] ...and demonic; because where bitter envying and selfish ambition *are*, there *is* dissension and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and without hypocrisy. Now *the* fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace” (vs 12-18).

When we go back through and study every one of these things, we will see something that is really very important; that this book of James really has a lot of instruction for Christian living for us. We will show how much the same kind of thinking is right here and how similar it is, in 1-John 3. They were having similar problems at the time that these were being written. This is talking about exactly the same thing. We're talking about a profession vs

behavior in James. We're talking about the reality of the source and the reality of the product.

1-John 3:4: “Everyone who **practices** sin...” That's the whole emphasis, *practicing* as a way of doing, and this is what James is saying; that if you do have the kind of conduct that has originated from God, you're not going to be *practicing* sin. So, it's not that just go out and you sin and break a law, or you sin in relationship to another person, but you are *practicing that as a way of life!*

“...is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness... [against law] ...And you know that He appeared in order that He might take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.... [meaning there is no sin in Christ] ...Everyone who dwells in Him does not *practice* sin...” (vs 4-6)—goes right along with the whole context.

This is where the whole doctrine of ‘born again’ that you cannot sin... People say that ‘I'm born again, I cannot sin.’ Well, you're still flesh and blood and that's very basic. This is that you're *not practicing* sin. That's why when you find yourself sinning, you end up with a guilty conscience, because you cannot *practice* and *live in* sin! You may be sinning for a time, but you're going to have to turn your behavior around because God's Spirit in you is going to condemn you. That's why you cannot be *practicing* sin.

“...anyone who *practices* sin has not seen Him, nor has known Him. Little children, do not allow anyone to deceive you... [let no one lead you astray] ...the one who practices righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous” (vs 6-7).

That has a great deal of meaning from the point of view that one of the things that the *grace of God* does for us, it puts us in righteous right standing with God, **by God's great gift to us!** Not that we are perfect of ourselves, but any perfection there is of God.

Verse 8: “The one who practices sin is of the devil because the devil has been sinning from *the* beginning. For this purpose... [or cause or reason] ...the Son of God appeared that He might destroy... [undo, nullify and bring to nothing] ...the works of the devil. Everyone who has been begotten... [the *KJV* says ‘born’ but it is ‘begotten’] ...by God does not practice sin, because His seed *of begetting* is dwelling within him, and he is not able to *practice* sin because he has been begotten by God” (vs 8-9).

So, what James 3:12 is talking about is nearly the same thing. He's saying that this tree must bring forth the kind of fruit that it is. And this vine must bring forth fruit of the kind of vine that it is. The same way with water, it can't be 'salt and sweet' at the same time. He uses fruit and produce and he uses water. In other words, if it is from God, if the seed of God is in you by 'begettall' of the Holy Spirit, then that is, over the long run, going to produce the right fruit. We've seen at the beginning that we all constantly sin, showing the conviction of mind when we do sin, but this shows the whole direction.

James 3:13: "Who *is* wise and understanding among you?...". Our wisdom is not that we are smart; not that we are intelligent. After all there is not anything that we have that was not given to us by God. One way or the other, there is nothing that we have. No one can stand up and say, 'I'm smart; I'm intelligent; I know this or I know that.' We know nothing except that we have the ability *given to us by God*, and by God's Spirit to see and understand those things (1-Cor. 2).

"...Let him demonstrate his works through good conduct in *the meekness of wisdom*" (v 13).

Let's understand something about Jesus: Though He was the Son of God, had to be the meekest person that ever existed. What James is saying here, when we put it together with Matt. 11, this is what he wants us to understand. Sometimes it does not appear this way, and sometimes when Jesus was talking to them, it did not appear this way.

What does it say about the meek? *Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth!* This kind of meekness that we are talking about here is not necessarily that you are humble and meek to everyone you meet, because there are times that you may have to stand up for what you believe and you may have to correct something that is not right. So therefore, to people you may not seem *meek*. So, this meekness is the meekness that comes from God and is directed to God, *just like Jesus' meekness*.

Right after Jesus got done excoriating different cities for their sins, telling them, 'Woe to you because you've sinned.'

Then He says, Matthew 11:28: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are *overly* burdened, and I will give you rest."

We're going to see something about the grace of God that's very important. Human beings are the only ones of all of God's creation that were made to receive God's grace in their minds.

Verse 29: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart..."

Not proud, not vain, not uplifted, not braggadocio, none of those things of human nature.

The only way then is to come to Christ, "...and you shall find rest for your souls" (v 29). When you're living in sin you're not restful; you're not peaceful. You're *driven* (James 1) just like the wind drives water and you're going here, there and everywhere, no stability.

Verse 30: "For My yoke *is* easy, and My burden is light." Who is it that lay grievous burdens to be born on people? *Men do!* Who turn around and take the Truth of God and make it *into a religion of man*, however modified and make it a burden and put a guilt trip and put all of these things on people that God never intended to be? That says something about some of the experiences that we've all gone through.

He's also talking about two kinds of wisdom: the wisdom from above that results in the right conduct.

James 3:14: "But if you have bitter envy..." There are two things with this word: it can mean *zealous*; it can mean here the *attitude of bitterness*.

"...and selfish ambition in your heart..." (v 14). This is the heart and core of what happens so much in the ministry. That's why you go along and all of a sudden you hear of this minister and you say, 'Why, I can't believe that!'

Because, v 15: "This wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, sensual *and* demonic." That's how Satan works within churches and ministers to get them, to lead them astray.

Whenever you have so much psychology preached, *beware!* The book *The Lies We Believe* has some psychology in it; *beware* when all that psychology comes along. What is psychology and psychiatry anyway, when you really get down to it? What is the Bible for? *Instruction on how to live! The standards of life!* Today you can't say there ought to be standards of life, because who are you to judge someone? You can't call 'perversion' a *perversion* anymore, because after all then you're discriminating against that person.

Verse 15: "This wisdom does not come down from above, **but is earthly, sensual [psychic] and demonic.**" There is a right psychology, which the Bible teaches—the books of Proverbs and Psalms, the Word of God—but what we're talking about is *psychology on how to live without God*. That's the whole basis of psychology and psychiatry.

I saw the other day that they were arguing about how you tell in a court of law how you tell

whether a person is insane or sane or when are they not responsible for their actions. It's all this psychology bit. They all have to admit that they really do not know. You can take this fellow, back in Minnesota, Jeffery Dahmer—cannibal! deliberately! I was reading this morning about the one man who escaped to tell what was going on. I don't know how he ever got into the apartment with Dahmer anyway, because there were body parts, and he opened the freezer and there was a head staring out at him. Nice friendly neighbor<sup>[factiously]</sup> and they were sitting there watching this horror movie and Dahmer puts his ear up against the guy's heart and says, 'I'm going to eat this soon.'

Nowhere does the Bible give the distinction of insanity. If they've done a crime worthy of death, the Bible says *they should be put to death!* But we have psychologists and psychiatrists getting up there and say, 'Well now, we need to explain this behavior.' Listen to any talk show psychologist and you will see what they try and do is explain to people *how they can overcome their guilt without repenting to God*. This kind of wisdom, based on psychology, based on this 'earthy wisdom'—*the wisdom of this world*—can never, never lead you to God! In fact, this is the kind of wisdom that can come in and tear a church apart, tear doctrine apart. Then what happens when that occurs?

Verse 16: "Because where bitter envying and selfish ambition *are*... [to try and get ahead] **...there is dissension and every evil thing.**"

- What has our experience been when that sort of 'wisdom' came into the Church leadership?
- Did we not have fights?
- Did we not have dissension?
- Did we not have people trying to get up over one another?

'I'm the greatest this; I'm the greatest that'? *Yes, we did!*

Let's see how that affected the Church in Corinth. If you want to know how bad a church can get, to the point of disintegration, just read all 1-Cor. and you're understand it.

1-Corinthians 1:10: "Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ... [he's calling on the authority of Christ; he's invoking Christ's name to get this point across]: ...that you all speak the same thing..."

That does mean then that by fiat you legislate everything the same. Why were they not speaking the same thing? Because they were being taught different things by Peter or by Paul or by Apollos? *No!* They were not speaking the same thing *because everyone was trying to give their own*

*interpretation of the Scriptures*. They were having the selfish ambition taking place there, this vaunting of the self, the misplaced zeal of envy. There can be some people who are so zealous, but a lot of that is just self-enthusiasm.

"...and *that* there be no divisions among you; rather, *that* you be knit together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For my brethren, it has been declared to me concerning you, by those of *the house* of Chloe, that there are contentions among you" (vs 10-11). That's what James is talking about, those kind of contentions which come from 'earthly, psychic *and* demonic' wisdom.

Verse 12: "Now this I say, since everyone among you says, 'I am of Paul'; or, 'I *am* of Apollos'; or, 'I *am* of Cephas'; or 'I *am* of Christ.' Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?" (vs 12-13).

1-Corinthians 3:3: "For you are still carnal.... [the devil's feeding ground] ...For since envy and contention and divisions *are* among you, are you not carnal? And *are you not* walking according to human ways?"

James was explaining the same difficulty and problem in the book of James, in referring to what was going on there in the Church. This causes all kinds of problems and difficulties.

Galatians 5:19 "Now, the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*: adultery..." I just know how all these programs can get on now. Have you noticed how, as a nation, all of these—starting with Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill, this woman in Florida and Kennedy Smith, and Mike Tyson and this Dahmer thing that's going on—we are being so programmed to the *bazaar* that it's going to be difficult for people to really have proper emotions the way that they ought to. It's not that it's just being discussed; it's being shown! It's right here, there it is, just listed right out here:

Verse 19: "Now, the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred..." (vs 19-20).

I just read an article on what some of those tribes in South Africa could do. They are into witchcraft and cutting up people just like this Dahmer up in Minnesota. My wife and I figured out the best judgment for Dahmer: send him on a trip to New Guinea so that he may be the meal of the cannibals over there. He can enjoy the 'fruit of his works.' I say that in jest, but isn't that bazaar! Even as Christians to even say that would be a proper judgment for him. Do these things affect us? *Sure they do!* But here it is, written in God's Word how



long ago? All of these things, the works of the flesh:

“...strifes, jealousies, indignations, contentions, divisions, sects, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such things as these... [just read you the major headlines of your paper today] ...concerning which I am telling you beforehand, even as I have also said in the past... [he’s told them many times about this] ...that those who do such things shall not inherit *the* Kingdom of God” (vs 20-21).

So, James is saying exactly the same thing in a little different way back here in the book of James. And from a church point of view, from a ministerial point of view you’re not going to be preaching the Gospel of Christ when you have division, heresy, dissention, selfish ambition and climbing to get ahead within the ranks of a ministry.

That’s why I think we have learned that the Bible talks about being the overseer, not the overlord, and ***he is to constantly point people to Christ!*** Not himself, not some other man, but to Christ. Now I can understand more why the New Testament was written in such a short, quick, compressed period of time. So that we would have a lot of other people making writings and accrediting them to Christ, which never came from Christ or the apostles. That’s how God was able to basically preserve the purity of the Word, by having it written so quickly and then having John doing the finalizing of the New Testament.

James 3:17: “But the **wisdom from above is first pure...**” It’s not mixed in with all this nonsense of the world. It’s not mixed in with all kinds of psychology. It’s not mixed in with all kinds of pagan religious formula.

By the way, in working on *The Christian Passover* I’ve discovered that there was a 15<sup>th</sup> Niacin supper that goes back to worshipping Baal. That’s what’s the matter with so many people, they come back with all these ‘religious’ arguments and it’s not from God and it’s not from His Word and it’s not pure.

Verse 17: “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, reasonable... [equitable] ...full of mercy and good fruits, impartial... [not a respecter of persons] ...and without hypocrisy.”

Let’s see how closely this follows along with the fruits of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22: “But the fruit of the Spirit...”

These are the things we need to work at, brethren. I read these things, and I say, ‘Oh, I’ve got a long way to go.’ I know you do, too. That means we keep going toward that.

“...is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (vs 22-23).

These are the things that we need to be concentrating on. It’s enough just living in this world. There’s a difference between living in the world and being affected by it *and* living in the world and being a part of it. That’s what James 4 is all about. Too many times we’re beat up by the world, beat up by the things that are there, and too many times we end up more irritated than we ought to be, because we are not—even with the Spirit of God in us—leading in this world, living in what we could say Biblically would be a ‘normal’ environment. We are a living in a strange, hi-tech environment that creates more problems for us.

We say we’re going to run off to a monastery. It won’t work, because you still carry human nature. That’s not the solution; the solution is continually overcoming, continually having the grace of God to let that overcoming be in the way that God wants it to be. So there it is!

Verse 24: “But those who *are* Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts. If we live by *the* Spirit, we should also be walking by *the* Spirit. We should not become vain-glorious, provoking one another *and* envying one another” (vs 24-26). You would think it was written from the same pen. It was *the pen of God!*

James 3:18: “Now *the* fruit of righteousness... [the fruits of the Spirit] ...is sown in peace for those who make peace.”

He’s talking to those within the Church—that’s what he’s talking about, and our conduct together as brethren. When we shift into James 4, we’re going to see that he no longer says, ‘brethren’—including himself in those things as he did in James 1-3.

- Matt. 6—about hypocrites:
  - ✓Do not be as the hypocrites, sounding the trumpet
  - ✓Do not be as the hypocrites, making your face all contorted when you fast
  - ✓Do not be as the hypocrites do and the heathen, which repeat prayers and stand in the corners and all this sort of thing
- Matt. 23—then where He lays the heavy burdens—‘Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees; hypocrites!’

A good translation of hypocrisy for religious people is *sanctimonious pretenders!* Remember that when you watch the religious channel and you see some of these wild people on there. Are they not

*sanctimonious pretenders?*

#### **JAMES 4:**

It shifts gears quite decisively into the situation to where you could almost entitle this *the world in the Church*, where the Church becomes so worldly that they are a part of the world. Let's see some of the things that the Apostle Paul was teaching about in relationship to the world. That's why I mentioned *your meekness has to be toward God*. You get out here in the world, and if you are not strong, they will steamroll over you. Just like in some of these cartoons, lay you out absolutely flat!

Galatians 1:6: "I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel." We've been in the Church long enough that we have seen that happen how many times? Where does this come from? *Comes from within the ministry!* It doesn't come from the members as such.

Verse 7: "Which *in reality* is not another gospel..." In other words, there is only one Gospel; can't have another.

"...but there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ" (v 7). That's how it starts.

- you change a little here
- you change a little there
- you get an interpretation that sounds reasonable
- you get an interpretation that sounds psychologically fitting

#### ***The wisdom of this world!***

Verse 8: "But if we, or even an angel from heaven..." These are the strongest words that the Apostle Paul wrote anywhere in the whole Bible. These are really strong!

"...should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!".... [then he says it again]: ...As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! Now then, am I striving to please men, or God? Or am I motivated to please men? For if I am yet pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ" (vs 8-10).

That's where all of these changes in doctrines come. It's one thing to come to real knowledge and understanding of the Truth and improve your doctrine in relationship to the Bible. It's another thing to change your doctrine because you've got to please men; because you have to please the world; because you want to be accepted

by the world. That is how worldliness comes into the Church.

James 4:1: "*What is the cause of quarrels and fightings among you? Is it not mainly from your own lusts that are warring within your members?* You lust, and have not; you kill, and are jealous, and are not able to obtain; you fight and quarrel, but still you do not have, because you do not ask. *Then* you ask, and you do not receive, because you ask with evil motives, that you may consume *it* on your own lusts. *You* adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that the friendship of the world is enmity *with* God? Therefore, whoever desires to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, 'The spirit that dwells in us lusts with envy'?" (vs 1-5).

(go to the next track)

Let's go back and go through each one of these verses and coordinate it with some other Scriptures in the New Testament.

- James 4:1-3—*the sixth commandment*, 'you shall do no murder.'
- James 4:4-5—*the seventh commandment*, 'you shall commit adultery.'

See how all of this fits in? How the mind of God has inspired the Word of God so that it fits? He's talking to people who were in the Church. Again, they let too much of the world in. Notice in v 1 he doesn't start out by saying, 'My brethren, why are we fighting among each other?' So, he's not including himself in this warring faction within the Church.

He's saying, v 1: "**What is the cause of quarrels and fightings among you?**...." And where does it come from? *It comes from the wisdom that is 'earthly and psychic and demonic!'* (James 3).

"...*Is it not mainly from your own lusts that are warring within your members?*" (v 1). Here was a church that was in such a condition that they accepted as normal and natural within the church congregation fighting and warring and politicking among each other, even to the point of:

Verse 2: "You lust, and have not; you kill, and are jealous..." That could have reference to the Jews who are joining in the renegade armies. They may have been Jews who were in the synagogues who profess Christianity, who then join these Jewish armies that were being raised up in smaller groups, but increasing all the time, to fight and revolt against the Romans. They would fight and war and kill and still didn't have.

1-John 2—concerning lusts, and this the whole epitome of it all. Lust comes upon as desires; the desires of pleasure, wealth, recognition.

1-John 2:15: “Do not love the world... [whereas in James they were bringing it in] ...nor the things *that are* in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

What happens then when you begin to love the world and you might have it in your heart to really do world good? What happens? *Like all the churches today, they try and make the world a better place and bring the Kingdom of God on earth now!* That’s the whole exercise of human nature: ***To show the futility that you cannot reform the world the way that it is and bring in the Kingdom of God!***

Verse 16: “Because everything that *is* in the world...” How could you reform television, movies, the printed word, political parties, the educational system or health system—all of these? You think about how you might go and change that.

“...the lust of the flesh... [you may stop it for a while, but you’re not going to get rid of it]...and the lust of the eyes, and the pretentious pride of physical life—is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world and its lust is passing away, but the one who does the will of God abides forever” (vs 16-17).

Let’s see how then Paul was instructing Timothy to not let this kind of behavior become a thing within the Church.

2-Timothy 2:19: “Nevertheless, the foundation of God stands firm... [he’s saying this in spite of all the heresy that’s going on] ...having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Let everyone who calls upon the name of Christ depart from unrighteousness.’” There’s the standard of what we are to be doing. I see myself falling short on that, and I’m sure you do, just as we found in the book of James.

Verse 21: “Therefore, if anyone has purged himself from these, he will be a vessel for honor, having been sanctified and *made* serviceable to the Master, *and* having been prepared for every good work. But flee youthful lusts; and pursue righteousness, faith, love *and* peace with those who are calling on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and ignorant speculations reject, knowing that they engender arguments. Now it is obligatory *that* a servant of *the* Lord not be argumentative...” (vs 21-24). So, there comes a point when a minister has to say enough is enough and be gone from it.

“...but gentle toward all, competent to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting those who set themselves in opposition; if perhaps God may grant them repentance unto acknowledging of *the* Truth, and *that* they may wake up *and* escape from the devil’s snare, who have been taken captive by him to *do* his will” (vs 21-26).

We’re going to see that these things come right on down till, James 4:7: “...**Resist the devil**...” We’re ending up with the same thing. Notice the pattern in every one of these other Scriptures that we’re studying, how we end up coming to the same source. Who is the source of sin, pride and vanity? *Satan the devil!*

Titus 3:8: “This *is* a faithful saying, and I desire you to strongly affirm *all* these things... [these are things a minister must do constantly] ...so that those who have believed God may apply themselves to doing good works...” Paul agrees with James; these good works are the same as the *works of faith* that James is talking about—exactly the same!

“...These things are good and profitable for men. But avoid foolish questions and genealogies, and debates and quarrels about law, for they are unprofitable and vain. After the first and second admonition, reject a man who is teaching heresy, knowing that such a person has been subverted, and is sinning, being condemned by his own words” (vs 8-11).

Now, that’s quite a bit of Scripture in there. This is showing what happens: People become *subverted* by Satan’s activity in doctrine, in Truth, and in the Word of God. That’s how you end up with congregations that are fighting, quarrelling and warring and striving; who’s going to be your minister today or tomorrow or the next day?

James 4:2: “You lust... [present tense] ...and have not...” Isn’t it always true, *the more that a person desires to have, the more that they realize that that is not satisfying*. Lusting can be any desire. It can be pleasurable. What do we see here? *You are lusting, desiring to have and have not!* Not successful!

“...you kill...” (v 2). This can be figuratively or it can be literally. How do you kill a person without killing them physically? *You destroy*

- their person
- their being
- their name

*through:*

- gossip!
- innuendos
- lies
- slander

All of those things we’re all going to have experienced sometime in our lives. This is the kind of killing that he’s talking about. That’s why the Bible says that if you have anything against your brother, you’re to go to him. What does Jesus say about prayers? *Your prayers are not heard if you’re*

*fighting, arguing and killing your brother!*

As we see that James ties in so much with Matthew that it's really quite phenomenal. It's not surprising from the point of view that *the mind of God* is the mind of God. This shows the kind of *spiritual killing* that we are dealing with here.

Matthew 5:21: "You have heard that it was said to those *in ancient times*, 'You shall not commit murder... [*sixth commandment*] ...but whoever commits murder shall be subject to judgment.'"

Jesus is coming and saying 'I'm going to give you a new standard. *I'm going to give you a standard that begins in your mind*, rather than a standard which is: Did he have the gun in his hand at the time that it went off, and was it determined that he did it?

Verse 22: "But I say to you, everyone who is angry... [*angry unto hate with bitter envy and jealousy*] ...with his brother without cause..."

It says in Eph. 5, 'be angry and sin not.' So, there's a proper anger. This is talking about an improper anger.

"...shall be subject to judgment. Now *you have heard it said*, 'Whoever shall say to his brother, "Raca," shall be subject to *the judgment of the council*.' But *I say to you*, whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be subject to the fire of Gehenna. For this reason, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go *your way*; first be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (vs 22-24).

That is the perfect and ideal standard. We need to realize that this is what the Bible is saying we need to do. With human nature, it then becomes difficult. What was one of the things that James said? *The wrath of man does not bring the righteousness of God!* Same thing here; ties right in with Matthew. So, that's how you 'kill' someone.

James 4:2: "...and are jealous..." This whole world today is set on jealousy. It's called *fairness!* I want you to think about that! That's the new 'catch word' for communism!—*fairness!* It isn't fair! So, the government now is going to bring *fairness!* And *fairness* is communism! There's equal treatment before the law, but what is trying to be perpetrated under the name of *fairness* is communism! That is based on lust. What gives you the right to have what you have? *Well, maybe you worked for it!* In the name of *fairness*, the government is going to tax you and give it to someone else. You can say, there's the whole thing with the socialist state is all wrapped up in this.

"...and are not able to obtain; you gift and quarrel, but still you do not have, because you do not ask" (v 2). *It's all pride and vanity!* You can say right here that v 2 handles every political movement and march that you would ever want to have anywhere. What do they always end up doing?

- fighting
- arguing
- quarrelling
- great contention here and there

Just think of what it is like within a church. We've gone through that within a church. Let's see *the source* of every one of these things.

- Who is envious of God?
- Who wanted to be like God?
- Who wanted to have the power of God?
- *Satan the devil!*
- How then did he seek to go about getting it?

John 8:44: "You are of *your father the devil*, and the lusts of your father you desire to practice..." What are we talking about here in James 4? *The lust that caused death, killing, contention, strife and subterfuge and all of this!* That's exactly what the devil has done.

"...He was a murderer from *the beginning*, and has not stood in the Truth because **there is no Truth in him**. Whenever he speaks a lie, he is speaking from his own *self*; for he is a liar, and the father of it" (v 44). Where do lies come from? *Pride! Vanity! Jealousy!*

Then, as human beings, we do like it says here, and you say, 'Ah! What I need to do is pray.' Then you pray, and as James said, James 4:3: "*Then you ask, and you do not receive... [Why are they not receiving?] ...because **you ask with evil motives**...*" 'Lord, let me win the lotto! Lord...' whatever it may be. 'Oh, Lord, can I have this and can I have that.' Your shopping list runs so long, but what are you going to use it for? *For yourself!*

"...that you may consume *it* on your own lusts" (v 3). Especially in this age, we have so many gadgets and things that it is incredible!

In writing on the Passover about the children of Israel when they left Egypt, I was thinking: What, as a slave, would a person have of your own? As a slave? *You don't have very much! You have to work for the rich that have everything!* When they left Egypt, God specifically said, 'Take jewels of silver and jewels of gold and raiment.' They cooked their unleavened bread ahead of time and they packed it in their packs and were marching out. It says a very interesting thing: 'They prepared for themselves no vittles.' They didn't walk out with pots of food.

They had gold and silver and raiment and unleavened bread and some few possessions. The reason they had to take the clothing was because, as slaves, they were virtually naked. They were in a destitute condition. You look at this world today with every gadget and everything that we have here. I was thinking: What if someone said, 'Pack up you're going to leave forever. I want you to take the bare minimum.' *We're lost!* I tell you, it's something!

That's how we end up. We start asking God for things that we can burn it up on our own desires. When you really get down to the nitty-gritty and you're talking about your life is threatened, there's really not very much left that you would want to keep—is there? It isn't that God doesn't want us to have.

But I can understand more why this world is in a whole Laodicean condition as a world. I would be hard pressed to say that we are not living in a Laodicean age and that we are not affected by Laodicean attitudes ourselves. I mean, let's not be marching up to God and saying, 'I'm a Philadelphian.' Who knows? I've done this, I work and work and nothing happens, and finally I say, 'Oh, yeah, that's right, I need to pray.' So then I pray about it and I work and work and finally it dawns on me that it is totally and completely wrong, my whole attitude and approach. So, it's very common to human beings and human nature.

They get so much into the world, v 4: "*You adulterers and adulteresses...*" Let me give you some things you can put in there that you can study:

- Luke 12:17-28—the farmer. He had all these great crops and he said, 'What am I going to do? I tell you what I'm going to do: I consider myself, soul, you've got all these things that you can store them up. I know what I'm going to do, I'm going to tear down my old barns and build bigger barns and fill it up. I'm going to say to my soul, sit back and relax and enjoy it and have a great time.' What was the message?  
*God said, 'Tonight, your life is required!'* So you end up like Solomon said in the book of Ecclesiastes where he's saying it's all 'vanity and misery and rottenness. I hate to die and leave all of this'—of course, he was the richest man in the world—'and leave it to these idiot sons of mine.' What did they do with it? *Squandered it!* And sure enough, when he died, what happened? *He left every penny!*
- Luke 18—asking with the wrong motives. The Pharisee that came down and said, 'Lord, I thank you that I'm not like other people; that I'm not an adulterer, an extortioner, I'm surely

not like this publican down over here; that miserable crud of a human being. I tithe of all that I have...'

Here's the Publican down there: 'Oh, God, I'm a miserable, wretch of a man.' And Jesus said, 'I tell you that the Publican went away justified, rather than the one who prayed saying how good he was.' That's how people ask amiss!

- Eph. 2:1-3—lust
- 1-Cor. 10—how the children of Israel lusted. God would have provided for them. What was the thing, after they *lusted* for it and they asked amiss and God gave it to them? They choked on it and nearly died? They didn't believe God and they said, 'Let's have this big sex party, we sure don't know where Moses is. Since we're out here in the desert, we might as well play games and bow down to this calf!' It's almost the same as television today!

James 4:4: "*You adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?....*" You make yourself an enemy of God.

- here's God Who wants to bless you
- here's God Who has called you
- here's God Who has given His grace
- here's God Who says love Me first with all your heart, mind, soul and being

and you say, 'But, I'd really rather like to have these things in the world, God.' Then you end up making yourself an enemy of God! Hopefully, none of us are in that position. But you think about all of these movements that people get themselves into with their churches.

- Oh, let's not have the death penalty. *You make yourself an enemy of God, because you fill the land full of crime!*
- Oh, let's not judge these homosexuals and perverts. *You make yourself an enemy of God, because you're a friend of the world!*
- Oh, the Sabbath is not that important. I don't need to keep that. I can earn double-time on Saturday. *You make yourself an enemy of God!*

"...Therefore, whoever desires to be a friend of the world **makes himself an enemy of God**" (v 4). Now, I've spoken a little bit about the middle-voice verb. You can identify that where I translate it as *himself, herself or themselves*, which means then *the one who is desirous to be a friend of the world is making himself*—by choice—*an enemy of God!* That's pretty strong words there. What he's talking about here you don't just sort of *slip into it*. This is a matter of willfully choosing those things of the

world over the things of God.

Then he get down here and talks about what is the source of it, v 5: “Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, ‘The spirit that dwells in us lusts with envy’?” That is the *spirit of man*; that’s not the Spirit of God. Try to explain it that the Spirit of God is over us. *No!* This is the *spirit of man* within him, lusting to envy.

- Rev. 17—adulterers and adulteresses, friendship with the world; the woman who commits fornication *and* all the kings of the world have drunk of her cup
- 2-Cor. 11:3—we’re to be the chaste bride of Christ

To show the spiritual application of this. This is not talking about being an adulterer or an adulteress in physically committing the act. This is talking about the *spiritual fornication* of the wrong application of God’s way, creating a false religion.

Revelation 2:14: “But I have a few things against you because you have there *those* who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication.”

God has one way to stop that today. Man is trying to figure out every way around it. That is the little teeny-weeny virus called *HIV-3, AIDS!* Remember that you can also get *spiritual AIDS* as it were, which leads to *spiritual death*, which is what this is talking about here.

Verse 20: “But I have a few things against you, because you allow the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants into committing fornication and eating things sacrificed to idols.”

There it is! This is what James is talking about. Instead of seeking the friendship of the world, what are we to seek? *Seek you first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness!* Then the things you need will be added to you.

To show that we are not be *of* this world—we live *in* the world—I would like to draw your attention to something that is true. Living in the world we obviously cannot stop the sins of the people around us. And it’s not our responsibility to do so. For example: if you worked at a bank and people brought in money to deposit, and as far as you knew it was a legitimate business. Working in the bank, you are working *in* the world, but you are not *of* the world. However, if one of the customers who would come in was organized crime or operating a house of ill-repute and brought in that money, you would still have to deposit it, because it’s not your responsibility to correct them on the

source of their money. But that person is obviously *in* the world; of the world; sinning with the world. You are *in* the world, but you are not *of* the world. There’s a vast difference.

John 17:14—the prayer that Jesus gave: “I have given them Your words, and the world has hated them because **they are not of the world...**” What happened here in the book of James, James is writing to these Jewish Christians who are in the synagogue; they were bringing in the world into their way of life and into their church and were becoming part and parcel of the lusts of this world.

Another example: What if you took a job as the campaign manager for Bill Clinton, and it was your duty to do everything in your power to make sure he won the Presidency. You would have to become part and parcel with this world to lie, to cheat, to undermine, to be envious against other people, to put them down to vaunt him up. If you were that then you would be *in* the world and *of* the world. Jesus says, ‘We are not of the world’ even though we’re in it.

“...just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You would take them out of the world, but that You would keep them from the evil one” (vs 14-15). I know there are times when we wish that He would take us out of this world. But in order to do that He must put us in the grave.

Verse 16: “They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in Your Truth; Your Word is the Truth” (vs 16-17). That then is how you can overcome and not be an enemy of God by being a friend of this world.

- What happens when you become so much a part of the world?
- What happens when you have so much of the world in your life?
- So much of the world in your church?
- What do you have to do?
- What does the world have to do?
- ***It has to accommodate sin!***

***When you accommodate sin, then sin loses its sinfulness!***

Hebrews 3:12: “Beware, brethren, lest perhaps there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in apostatizing from *the* living God.” Going out into the world, making yourself an enemy of God.

Verse 13: “Rather, be encouraging one another each day, while it is called ‘today,’ so that none of you become hardened by *the* deceitfulness of sin.”—and sin is no longer is sinful, that’s what can happen.

Verse 14: “For we are companions of Christ,

if we truly hold the confidence *that we had* at the beginning steadfast until the end. As it is being said, ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion’” (vs 14-15).

***Once the world is so far into our lives, or into a church, then you must accommodate sin! When that sin is accommodated, then sin loses its sinfulness!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) James 3:11-18
- 2) 1 John 3:4-9
- 3) James 3:13
- 4) Matthew 11:28-30
- 5) James 3:14-16
- 6) 1 Corinthians 1:10-13
- 7) 1 Corinthians 3:3
- 8) Galatians 5:19-21
- 9) James 3:17
- 10) Galatians 5:22-26
- 11) James 3:18
- 12) Galatians 1:6-10
- 13) James 4:1-5, 1-2
- 14) 1 John 2:15-17
- 15) 2 Timothy 2:19, 21-26
- 16) James 4:7
- 17) Titus 3:8-11
- 18) James 4:2
- 19) Matthew 5:21-24
- 20) James 4:2
- 21) John 8:44
- 22) James 4:3-5
- 23) Revelation 2:14, 20
- 24) John 17:14-17
- 25) Hebrews 3:12-15

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 2
- James 1
- Matthew 6; 23
- Ephesians 5
- Luke 12:17-28; 18
- Ephesians 2:1-3
- 1 Corinthians 10
- Revelation 17
- 2 Corinthians 11:3

#### Also referenced: Books:

- *The Lies We Believe* by Chris Thurman
- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter

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## Epistle of James IX Ten Commandments to Overcome Worldliness #1

Fred R. Coulter

Think about the things that we have covered, very basic and critical things. We go back to little more than a year and we went through a series *the Truth of the Passover*. Now we are finding that that is so absolutely critical within the Church of God. There are so many people now moving to accept a 15<sup>th</sup> Passover for the Old Testament. Some will say that as long as you keep the 14<sup>th</sup> in the New Testament in the New Testament, then you're okay. Well, if the Old Testament were truly the 15<sup>th</sup> then we could say yes, we would be okay. However, you have a problem. The problem is that 'a little leaven leavens the whole lump.' Once the toe is in the door, what naturally follows? *The other four toes!* Then the foot and soon the leg and then pretty soon the whole body.

So, in analyzing what we've covered, we've covered some of the most basic things in great detail, which are very important for us to know and understand, because they all have to do with keeping us in contact with God and Jesus Christ, because of the covenant of God, which becomes very important. Why is the Passover important? Jesus said, '*Unless you eat My flesh and drink My blood you have no life in you.*'

Satan is clever enough to understand that he's not going to run into any congregation that is firmly convicted of God and say, 'Hey, everybody, let's go to church on Sunday.' He'd be railroaded out the door. So, he puts a little doubt and he says, 'How do you know the Passover is on the 14<sup>th</sup>? Can you prove it? So, we went through and proved it was on the 14<sup>th</sup>, because it's so important that if you take it on the wrong day or in the wrong way, then you are not taking it worthily and you are 'eating and drinking damnation unto yourself.' Then you put yourself under the judgment of God rather than under the grace of God.

The Passover must be attacked, undermined and eroded! That's what's happening everywhere. The whole Church of God is being assaulted with the 15<sup>th</sup> Passover. Not just a doctrinal problem, but assaulted. The Church of God Seventh-Day don't even care anymore whether it's the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup>. They're embroiled in the problem of fighting against Sunday-keepers. Think about a problem! How weak and dull and dead that they have become, that they now have a Sunday-keeping movement within the Church of God Seventh-Day. That is something!

What was one of the next major things that

we covered? *Pentecost!* Remember that? We went through a detailed, excruciatingly detailed, and I brought you copies of the calendar and showed you how to count it 6-10 times; showed you how the Pharisees the counted it; showed you how it should be counted properly according to the Scriptures, so you would know and understand it. Why is that very important as a central doctrine for Christianity? *The Holy Spirit, yes!* If you don't have the Spirit of Christ you're none of His!

Do you see how central these things are? Not that we said that we're going to be on the cutting edge of Bible study; *no!* We were fighting all of these things and we have found out, looking back on it, that the whole Church of God—many different congregations, many different groups—are being assaulted with these very things right now.

What was the next one we studied? *Atonement!* There were people saying you no longer have to fast on Atonement. ***All of those things are assaulting the Truth!*** Since you can't get people to throw Truth away wholesale, you get them to nibble it away.

What was another thing that we covered last year *The three days and three nights!* Is that not important? *Yes!* Isn't it amazing that we don't have to go back and say, 'Here's how to count: one, two, three!' What's that book, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten?* Why is that important? *It's a sign! I will be in the heart of the earth as Jonah was in the belly of the giant fish.* God created it just for Jonah. He had his internal fish compartment that was dark, dank—not like the Pinocchio cartoon where he gets in there and strikes a match. I'm sure Jonah did not have any matches. So, how did Jonah know he was in there three days and three nights? *God had to tell him!*

What was another thing that we covered? *Who is Jesus?* We finished that coming right up to the Feast of Unleavened Bread. All of those things are very important because it shows what Satan is doing.

What else did we study? *Satan's Ten Most Believable Lies!* If you have the book and series, go back and get it. I think that I need to send those out to people just coming out of some of these circumstances that they have been in. There are some people who have been so beat up by churches and church ministers and people within the Church



and with their own sins combined together, that some of them are ready to give up on God.

Fortunately, we can be thankful—I hate to use the term ‘fortunately’ because that means *just by the slight of chance*. So, I will use the term ‘fortunately’ from the point of view that I don’t want to say that *we* deliberately did all of that so now we can help people. No, we did it because we were being assaulted by it and we needed to find the Truth of God and now we have it and we can help other people with it, which is a very important thing to do. Having gone through all of the things that we have gone through as a church and the people of God, we have ended up being in very difficult circumstances, and we have ended up, in too many cases, that we have allowed too much sin in our lives that we should not do, *because we were measuring ourselves by the wrong standard*. And that wrong standard was: What is the other Christian I know doing?

Which is why the book of James was written, so that *we do not compare ourselves among ourselves!* As Paul said, ‘If we compare ourselves among ourselves we’re not wise.’ So, lots of times we have come—and that’s why James 4 is so important—to the point that we have allowed sin or the world or the wrong standard of judgment—by looking at other Christians—instead of looking into the ‘perfect law of liberty’ to show us what we need to do.

Therefore, we justify our behavior then on our interpretation of the Bible, which may not necessarily be correct. That’s why James 4 is so important. This is to help us understand what is being taught in a way whereby we capture the power of God’s Word and we also understand what it means for us.

Let’s review just a little bit. We can think of these verses in several different ways. They apply in many different ways.

James 4:1-4—pertains to the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment: ‘*You shall do no murder.*’

- vs 4-5—pertains to the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment: ‘*You shall not commit adultery.*’
- James 4:1:1: “*What is the cause of quarrels and fightings among you?...*”

We can apply this:

- individually
- maritally
- congregationally—inter-church relationship between one congregation and another
- ministerially—between ministers

Anyway you want to apply it, this applies, and James is writing to Christian believers.

“...*Is it not mainly from your own lusts that are warring within your members?*” (v 1). If this is happening, then there is nice ammunition and cannon fodder—both—for Satan to work with.

Verse 2: “*You lust [desire], and have not...*” You want this, you want that, you want the other thing. You may not necessarily get it in this life. You can’t have everything in this life the way that you want it—whether it be a job, a marriage, an income, where you live, where you work—you may not be able to control all of these things, and you may want something else.

What the old saying? *The grass is greener on the other side*, until you get over there and find out it was painted, or it’s all mowed weeds. Once we lived out on ‘Lover’s Lane’ and they never could keep that street sign up because it became a souvenir for everyone. We had a lot of weeds out there in the front yard and out in the pasture—we had two-and-a-half acres. Anyway, when I would mow it, it would look great. I always tell Delores, ‘Mowed weeds look good.’ She says, ‘Yeah, as long as they’re green.’

So when you’re *lusting* and looking on the other side of the fence and think that what you have on your side of the fence—because you’re used to it then—is old, worn out and difficult and you don’t want it. So, you look at something on the other side of the fence and you think you want this. A new car, a new home, a new wife, a new job—whatever. *Lusting, and you have not!* Then when you get it it’s not what you think!

How many have sent off these Reader’s Digest contests: you are on the list to win \$10-million. We’ve all done it. How many have won that? *Nobody!* Then when you get the stupid book, it’s not what you thought it was. Or you get the thing that’s advertised on TV. Listen to Rush Limbaugh if you can, he’s got this spoof ad: We were closed yesterday and we will be closed tomorrow, we’re open right now and we have a 60 second sale going on and now there’s only 55 seconds left. Hurry up! Too much of what happens in our lives ends up that way.

“...you kill...” (v 2). You can kill people in many ways. You don’t have to stick a knife in them. I just heard that in Berkley they found in one of the halls—the nice liberal college over there—a co-ed stabbed to death. *You kill!* We don’t go out and kill people by knife, but we kill people by tongue, by fights.

“...and are jealous, and are not able to obtain; you fight and quarrel, but still you do not have, because you do not ask. *Then* you ask... [‘Oh yes, Lord, I need to pray.’] ...and you do not

receive, because you ask with evil motives, that you may consume *it* on your own lusts” (vs 2-3).

I know a fellow who went out just to see how many cars he could buy on credit. He ended up with three. He wasn't making any money, but he had \$150,000 in debts on cars. He had a \$64,000 Corvette—he had to turn the keys into the bank six weeks later. Perfect example.

Verse 4: “*You* adulterers and adulteresses...” There are many ways that that can happen. Spiritually, Rev. 17—‘all drink of the cup of the wine of her fornication.’ This is spiritually applied to all of these little doctrines coming within the Church. These little things to come in and take you away from Christ, to make you take that first step away. Adultery *does not begin* with the act. Adultery *ends* with the act. **Adultery begins, as Christ said, in the mind from the lust!** That can be:

- spiritually
- physically
- maritally

I just talked to a man back in the Midwest and the minister back there lined him up to marry this gal who was a homosexual and never told him, and the minister new it.

“...don't you know that the friendship of the world is **enmity** with God?... [same word that is used there about the carnal mind] ...Therefore, whoever desires to be a friend of the world makes himself... [by his own choice] ...an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, ‘The spirit that dwells in us lusts with envy’?” (vs 4-5). We covered that with *works of the flesh, the law of sin and death dwelling in us*. It is true! However, there's hope:

Verse 6: “But He [God] gives **greater** grace....” Not that we can live in sin, but that we can come out of the world! That we can overcome the lust! Remember what John said, ‘The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life’ that is not of the Father but is of the world.’

“...He gives greater grace...” so that we can come out of it! I'll tell you one thing, the more you really understand the grace of God, the more you see the severity of sin for what it really is.

“...This is the reason it says, ‘God sets Himself against *the* proud, but He gives grace to *the* humble’” (v 6). This tells us an awful lot.

What I want to do so that we can study this in a complete package, and then we'll go back and study this section.

Verses 6-the first part of 11 gives the ‘ten commandments’ on **how to recover yourself from**

**sin and pride!** This becomes very important.

Verse 6: “But He **gives** greater grace. This is the reason it says, ‘God sets Himself against *the* proud, but He **gives** grace to *the* humble’”—currently, active, constantly, ongoing

### The Ten Commandment to Overcome Worldliness:

These are all *imperative* in the Greek—a command!

1. “Therefore, **submit yourselves to God**...” (v 7).
2. “...**Resist the devil** and he will flee from you” (v 7).

Since the Church has been assaulted everywhere by so many of these doctrines, that becomes important

3. “**Draw near to God**, and He will draw near to you...” (v 8).
4. “...**Cleanse your hands**, you sinners...” (v 8).
5. “...and **purify your hearts**, you double-minded!” (v 8).
6. “**Be grieved and mourn and weep**...” (v 9).
7. “...let your **laughter be turned into grieving**...” (v 9).
8. “...and **your joy into mourning**” (v 9).
9. “**Humble yourselves** before the Lord and He will exalt you” (v 10)
10. “Brethren, **do not talk against one another**...” (v 11).

“...The one who talks against a brother, and judges his brother, is speaking against *the* Law, and is judging the law. But if you judge *the* Law, you are not a doer of *the* law; rather, *you are* a judge. But there is *only* one Lawgiver, Who has power to save and to destroy. Who are you that you presume to judge another?” (vs 11-12).

This can apply to any situation, v 16: “But now you boast in your own arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, *if* anyone knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin” (vs 16-17).

That all ties in together. You find this in the Word of God always, brethren: God exposes sin for what sin is. Then what does He do? **He provides a way out!** As we have seen, one of the problems that we have in this Church is that **there is too much of the world in the Church!** The first reaction is going to be: *But not in me!* and *Not in my church!*

Let's look at a couple of other Scriptures here as a background and setting before we get into these ‘ten commandments’ on how to come out of the world or how to get the world out of you—we could apply it both ways. Here's what happens when you are so far into the world. Because a person appears ‘religious’ does not mean that he is not in the world. Being in the world is a matter of **how you view your life in relationship to God more than**

where you are as a physical position. We can all have different ideas from the world. Here's what happens:

Hebrews 3:12: "Beware, brethren, lest perhaps there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in apostatizing from *the* living God." What Satan wants us to do is *take that first step*, whatever it may be.

Verse 13: "Rather, be encouraging one another each day..." We need to. Someone comes up and says, 'Brother or Sister, maybe you need to re-examine what you think you're going to do here, because I think you're headed for a fall.' *No, I'm not headed for a fall. I feel so good since I decided to do this.* 'Well, you don't know.'

"...while it is called 'today'... [that you may find that way out that God has provided] ...so that none of you become hardened by *the* deceitfulness of sin" (v 13).

We're going to see in a minute what that 'deceitfulness of sin' can do. And it can, because *deceitfulness is the trickery of lust!* What is that the human heart is? *Deceitful above all things (Jer. 17:9)!* {note the books: *The Lies We Believe In* and *Satan's Most Believable Lies* and the sermon series } He's assaulting us, brethren! He wants to get us—individually and collectively—anyway he can! He's got the world.

- Don't you agree he's got the world?
- Who then is he interested in? What then is interested in?
- *He's interested in changing the Word of God just enough so that you miss the mark!*
- *He's interested to allure to your lust just enough to get you to take that first step!*

Then he's there to want you to take the second step, and the third step, and the fourth step; and then pretty soon the *deceitfulness of sin* BAM! *gottcha!*

Then you have to do like David did, Psalms 51, after the death of the baby. Remember that? He had to humble himself. So, it's the *deceitfulness of sin!*

Verse 14: "For we are companions of Christ, *if*... [conditional] ...we truly hold the confidence *that we had* at the beginning steadfast until the end." Steadfast all this week! Steadfast all this month! It's kind of like insurance: this insurance salesman was selling insurance and someone said, 'Well, I don't know if I can pay that high a price on that premium.' The salesman says, 'I have the perfect insurance plan for you. It costs 50% less than this—would you be interested in that?' *Yes!* 'This insurance plan is called *The 29-Day Coverage*. You tell me which 29 days you want to be covered, because on the 30<sup>th</sup> &

31<sup>st</sup> day we won't cover you.

It's just like being *steadfast*. You don't be steadfast for 29 days and on the 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> day you go out and do whatever you want, and now you're under the *grace of God* again on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month. *NO! You're steadfast unto the end!* Remember the parable of he who sets his hand to the plow and looks back is not worthy.

Now, let's see what the *deceitfulness of sin* does! Believe me, this is in full operation and up and running well, and hard and fast, because of the deceitfulness of sin, and I suppose that we've all heard the message to the Laodiceans enough times that we all know it by heart. But I tell you one thing, it so fits this age in which we are living. God gives a witness:

Revelation 3:14: "And to the angel of the Church of *the* Laodiceans, write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginner of the creation of God. I know your works... [we all have works] ...that you are neither cold nor hot; I would *that* you be *either* cold or hot.... [you're comfortable] ...So then, because you are lukewarm, and *are* neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth. For you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'; and you do not understand that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (vs 14-17).

Does this not happen with the *deceitfulness of sin*? Have not I, have not you gone along and done things and think: How could this be? *When you really come to yourself!* But as you're in it and you're going along, you do what? *You justify it!* What becomes the greatest problem in this whole thing?

Verse 17: "For you say..." In other words, it gets into an attitude of talking back to God. It gets into an attitude of telling God exactly what you're going to do. There isn't anybody going to tell God what to do, because God *is* God! *He's going to tell us what to do!* That's how the *deceitfulness of sin* comes along.

Then God comes along and says, 'I'm going to give you a proposition here, I'm going to give you a way out—though you're blind, naked, miserable and poor spiritually—I'm going to give you a way out.' With every condemnation of sin that there is in the Bible, *God gives a way out!* That's why it says, 'there is more grace.'

Verse 18: "I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire..." I see this so much. There are so many people out there, brethren, that have come in contact with the Church of God—Worldwide,

International, or whatever other congregation that there is—that have been so much like those 10 virgins (Matt. 25). Where at the last minute, when they need to get their priorities turned around, what do they say? ‘Oh, I never new that. Give it to me.’ *We can’t!*

Just like I had to tell someone about the Passover thing. I’m not trying to avoid it, but I can’t tell you in a short conversation on the telephone a very technical, detailed thing, which takes many pages of writing, just wait till you get it. Sooner or later it’s going to come to the point that people say, ‘I’m running out.’ And the truth is, I cannot give you what I have; you cannot give me what you have. In other words, if it’s God’s Spirit it has to come from God. God is saying, ‘I’m going to give you a chance here.’

Verse 18: “I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire...” *Gold is the highest form of righteousness* (1-Cor. 3). He’s going to say, ‘I’m going to give you a chance for the highest form of righteousness, but:

- it’s going to come in fire
- it’s going to come in trial
- it’s going to come against your human nature and your ways

“...so that you may be rich; and white garments... [which pictures the *perfect righteousness* of God] ...so that you may be clothed and the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed...” (v 18).

Have you ever had it where you’re really not in a clothed condition to meet someone and there’s a knock on the door? Would you run to the door in your unclothed condition and say, ‘Hello, what do you want?’—standing there in your ‘birthday suit’ or whatever? *No, you wouldn’t!* You would scurry and hurry and run, you’d throw on a bathrobe, pull on some trousers, put a dress on, or whatever it is, and then you would run to the door and say, ‘I’m sorry I had to make you wait so long, may I help you?’

Well, spiritually it is the same thing. The Word of God is *sharp and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword and cuts to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit and the joints and marrow* and is a *discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart!* So therefore, on the way out, he says, ‘I’m going to give it to you so that you may have that *righteousness of gold*, though you’re sloppy, poor, blind and naked, I’m going to give you a way.

“...and to anoint your eyes with eye salve, so that you may see.... [not only see God, but see yourself] ...As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at

the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. To the one who overcomes will I give *authority* to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His throne” (vs 18-21).

It’s amazing, brethren, how the Bible just all fits together:

- the same mind
- the same words
- the same thought
- the same spirit

This is why He’s giving *greater* grace. Is that not gracious of God to do what we just read in Rev. 3? *Yes, it is! Very gracious of God!*

And this is the reason James says, James 4:6: “...‘God sets Himself **against** the proud, but He gives grace to the humble.’” The *King James* says ‘resist the proud.’ That is as in combat; that’s what the Greek means. Who is the father of the proud? *Satan the devil!* How does pride enter in? *By us telling God what we will and will not do in relationship to His Word.* Classic example: Sunday! {note: Rom. 8:7—the proud with enmity}.

Let’s see how this pride fights back against God. When someone is confronted with some correction, which comes from God, what is the natural reaction if they don’t want to receive it? Stephen said to all those religious leaders and their pompous ceremonies, and all of their religious garb, right at the Sanhedrin, brethren. Where did the Sanhedrin meet? *The Sanhedrin met in the court of the men of Israel, right at the temple!*

This is where this was. After giving a summary of the plan of God, Stephen says:

Acts 7:51: “O stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You do always resist... [fight against] ...the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did*, so also *do* you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?....” (vs 51-52).

Why? *Because they didn’t like what they said!* Remember the incidents of Jeremiah? of Amos? of Ezekiel? of Isaiah? *They didn’t like what God said!*

“...And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, of Whom you have become the betrayers and murderers; who received the law by *the* disposition of angels, but have not kept it” (vs 52-53). What happened when they heard this? *They ran on him!*

Verse 54: “And when they heard these things, they were cut to their hearts...” Rather than

repent, what did they do? *In pride 'we must defend ourselves.'* What did they do? *Right in the palms of Satan the devil:*

"...and they gnashed their teeth at him [bit him]" (v 54).

Verse 58: "And cast *him* out of the city *and* stoned *him*...."

Now, that's an ultra extreme! I don't expect to be gnashed when I'm done with this sermon; I know that. But it's good that we get the full understanding of what we have here.

2-Timothy 3:8: "Now just as Jannes and Jambres... [the pagan religious leaders in the court of Pharaoh] ...stood against Moses, in the same manner also these are *brazenly* standing against the Truth..." Here's what happens when there comes too much world, too much pride. What happens when you resist the Truth long enough?

(go to the next track)

Verse 8: "...*they are* men of depraved minds, reprobate in respect to the faith. But they will proceed no further, because their folly will become clearly evident to everyone, just as theirs also was" (vs 8-9).

That's the ultimate of where resisting God and being proud against God comes to. When we pull ourselves up by our own great spiritual 'bootstraps' then we're confronted with this problem.

Romans 9:19: "Will you then reply to me, 'Why does He yet find fault? For who has opposed His purpose?'" He's talking about Pharaoh. God raised Pharaoh up and Pharaoh hardened his heart. God hardened Pharaoh's heart and Pharaoh hardened his heart.

Verse 20: "Yes, indeed, O man, who are you to answer against God?..." That's the way some people are. 'I'll give you my answer' and quote Scripture back, just like Satan did to Christ. In the final analysis, can any of us reply against God? *NO!* The only thing we can say is, 'O God, forgive me! O God, Your grace is what we need.'

- we're not going to go up and tell God how to interpret the Bible
- we're not going to go up and tell God what doctrine is
- we're not going to go up and tell God who He can and cannot save

All of those things are in here.

"...Shall the thing that is formed say to the one who formed *it*, 'Why did you make me this way?'" (v 20). There are just certain circumstance

we may find in life that that's the way that it is.

Today in the 'women's movement' so many women say, 'You know, why am I a woman? I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll start a women's movement. Yes, we will get all the rights of a man, and then we'll come back and get all the rights of women and we'll be twice as good as the men.' I'm exaggerating a little bit here.

We've got a couple of little dogs at home, and you'd think dogs are smart. No, they're not smart. They're affectionate from the point of view that God is going to teach us even from a dumb animal that they need love. But they are driven by their appetites; that's how you train them and make friends with them. They are very, very sensitive.... A dog does what a dog does because that's the way God made it. Another interesting thing about dogs that I saw on one of these Discovery shows. It showed the wild dogs in Africa and they run out and kill and eat. Once they start on a hunt you cannot force them back unless something bigger, stronger and tougher comes along and takes it from them.

Then it showed the difference between that and shepherd dogs. Shepherd dogs will shepherd the sheep by command. You can have three dogs—that's all it takes—one shepherd and you can control about 4,000 sheep. Domestic dogs do not have the lust to kill, because they have been trained and bred, and they can be controlled. It showed the fantastic things that they can do with them, just by command—they can get them to back up and go into a corral. They can move them clear on the other side of a hill. They can drive them clear up a valley. In New Zealand they have a law that when you sell your sheep ranch, you must sell the sheep and the dogs, because they're use to each other. It's really quite amazing what those dogs can do.

There again, "...Shall the thing that is formed say to the one who formed *it*, 'Why did you make me this way?'" (v 20).

Dogs don't have that consciousness. Only human beings are the ones that have that kind of consciousness. It can be expressed in another way: 'God, why are you doing this to me?' Have you ever been in a situation like that? Well, maybe God isn't doing it to you! Maybe those things are happening because of what you're doing, or what I am doing. I've had things happen to me that I don't like. I've been in that position, too. That is all part of the *pride!*

James 4:6<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup>: "...'God sets Himself against... [in resistance as in a combat or fight] ...*the* proud, **but** He gives grace to *the* humble.'" How does a person become humble? That's the whole thing.

### **Commandment #1 and #9:**

**“Therefore, submit yourselves to God...”** (v 7). This is how you become humble, because if you subject yourself and your will to God then you’re humbling yourself.

Verse 10: **“Humble yourselves before the Lord...”** That can mean in the side of, but it means *before* the Lord. In other words, don’t do your righteousness before people, but in the sight of God.

Let’s tie these together, because this is the way that we fight *pride*. This is the way we overcome *pride*. Just think what Jesus had to go through to be the most humble man that ever lived. I know it says that of Moses (Num. 11), that Moses was the meekest man of all men on the earth. I understand that, at that time, but he did not surpass Christ; we can be guaranteed that.

Let’s look at the companion Scriptures that we have on this. We will tie **commandment #9—*humble yourselves before the Lord***, and **commandment #1, *therefore submit yourselves to God***. If *pride* has gotten in the way, then pride is there to lead you away from God. So, you turn back and you subject yourselves to God.

The word *submit* is not quite as abject of an attitude of mind as ‘subject yourselves to God.’ We all submit to the law of some things of the land that we might not necessarily like; we submit to it. We may grumble about it, but we are not *subjecting* ourselves to it in the sense that we wholly, totally agree to it.

1-Peter 5 ties right in with it. It’s amazing! You go through and see that the New Testament is so fantastic and so great. It’s not ‘thus says the Lord’ to the whole world. In a sense it is, but it’s ‘thus says God to each one of us individually and personally through a letter called *an epistle*. That’s why the New Testament is so powerful. It is intended to get us to *willingly*—through the grace of God—*change our behavior* to make it more conform to what Christ’s behavior is like.

1-Peter 5:5: “In the same manner, *you* younger men be subject [submit] to *the* older men; and all *of you* be subject to one another...” It’s the same word—subject or submit—used interchangeably.

“...being **clothed with humility**... [exactly the same situation we’re talking about in James 4] ...because God sets Himself against *the proud*...” (v 5). What is this telling us? *One of the big problems within the Church is pride!*

- Peter wrote of it
- James wrote of it
- Paul wrote of it

- John wrote of it
- the Old Testament is full of it

“...but He gives grace to *the* humble” (v 5). Almost exactly the same wording as in James. That’s how then you receive the grace of God.

Verse 6: “Be humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God so that He may exalt you in *due* time.” In God’s way of things, He’s going to work it out in *HIS time! In HIS way!*

Verse 7: “Casting all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you.” We know in John 16:27 that God Himself is loving us.

Verse 8: “Be sober!...” This doesn’t mean to be sober from being drunk; this means be *serious-minded* because of the degree of the situation.

“...Be vigilant!...” (v 8). In both cases we see that Satan the devil is right there. As I said when we began, ***Satan is interested most profoundly in those who have the Spirit of God!*** He’s already got the world, so he wants us!

“...For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour” (v 8). For whatever reason! In this case, it’s not the toe in the door. In this case it’s a lion in your house, *your spiritual house!*

How many have seen this on Discovery Channel or PBS where they show this whole tribe of lions and they follow them day and night for months. They show what the lions do at night. That’s why they sleep all day. The only time I would agree with the title—The Hard Days Night—for a lion that fits. They go out and the stalk and they kill. Have you ever seen a whole tribe of lions fighting over a kill? *It is something!* They are fighting each other: clawing, gnashing, biting. They don’t care about the weak ones. They kick them out. It’s something!

Then they’re all down there ‘licking their chops’ and the blood is all over and they’ve been hacking out the bones and the guts and the meat. All the hyenas and jackals are on the side and they’re waiting. In the daytime then all the buzzards come down, and in less than a day all the bones are picked clean. Then some other animal comes along and gets the bones and takes care of those.

Think of this way: That’s what Satan would want to do! He’s, v 8: “...walking about seeking anyone he may devour!” Are we throwing little pieces of meat out there for the ‘lion’ to come and get us? *Need to be careful!*

Verse 9: “Whom resist...” Part of humbling yourself is *resisting the devil in the faith!* You can’t fight him on his terms. You can’t outfox him because you think you’re smarter.

You have to “...resist, **steadfast in the faith**, knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are* in the world” (v 9). There it is, right there! Is Satan interested in the brethren in the Church? *Yes!* What better way to get them:

- than to cause trouble in their personal life
- than to cause trouble within the Church
- than to let the whole hierarchy and structure of the ministry become so corrupt that you give up on faith

I got this letter from a man who said, ‘I don’t know where to turn. I don’t know who to believe. I don’t know who to follow.’

**What is the thing that Satan can use to devour me? In many cases, we know! Don’t leave the bait on the porch!**

It’s like these people who go to Yellowstone National Park. They think it’s cute, ‘I’ll feed the bears’—until they lose a hand. The same way with a ‘lion’—don’t leave your sins out there hanging so far out and leave them unattended to and leave them un-repentant of, or worse still, in pride maintain that what you’re doing is right when it’s not and then you’re going to be devoured.

Let me just mention one thing, just as an aside, Matthew 23:2: Christ said, “The scribes and the Pharisees have sat down on Moses’ seat *as judges*.” That’s an interesting statement there. It actually means in the Greek that they have seated themselves down in Moses’ seat, because they’re certainly not doing as Moses.

Verse 3: “Therefore, every judgment that they tell you to observe, observe and do....” In other words, when it comes out of the Word of God.

Verse 12: “And whoever will exalt himself shall be humbled [abased]; and whoever will humble himself shall be exalted.” That ties right back here with James 4. All of this comes in with *subject yourselves to God* and *humble yourselves to God*, because it is very similar and very close.

Isaiah 57:15: “For thus says the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity; Whose name is Holy; ‘I dwell in the high and Holy place, even with the one who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.’”

Isaiah 66:1: “Thus says the LORD, ‘The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where, then, *is* the house that you build for Me? And where *is* the place of My rest? For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,’ says the LORD. ‘But to this one I will look, to

him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word’” (vs 1-2).

Phil. 2 becomes very important in understanding the example of humility that Jesus gave for us. So, when we are humbling ourselves to come to God, we’re going to see that part of that then is in repentance when we get to the other commandments. Let’s look at humility that Jesus gave to us.

Philippians 2:7: “But emptied Himself, *and* was made in *the* likeness of men, *and* took the form of a servant; and being found in *the* manner of man, He humbled Himself, *and* became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross” (vs 7-8).

That is our example! You consider him who ‘endured such contradiction of sinners against himself’ (Heb. 12).

## **Commandment #2**

After you humble yourselves to God, James 4:7: “...Resist the devil... [resist him in the faith; fight against him with the Word of God] ...and **he will flee from you**.” There are many other Scriptures we can add to this.

John 17:15: “I do not pray that You would take them out of the world, but that You would keep them from the evil one.”

Matt. 4 & Luke 4 records the temptation of Jesus in fighting and resisting Satan. Pay particular attention to how Satan quotes Scripture. Matt. 6:12-17—the Lord’s prayer. Where that you pray to ‘forgive us our sins’ on a daily basis, and to ‘lead us unto temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’ And you can only do that if you submit yourselves to God and resist the devil! He’s not going to come with something obvious. He’s going to come with something that seems right.

You’re not going to be walking into a bank to cash a check and all of a sudden say, ‘Oh boy, I’m going to hold up this bank and kill ten people.’ No, Satan can’t get you on that, but he may get you on something else.

Eph. 6 shows the enemy. I tell you, just after looking back and reviewing what has happened to the Church of God and all of the assault of doctrine that takes away belief. Some people like to say, ‘Doctrine is not important, we need love.’ **Both are important!**

Can you drive your car without gas or diesel? *No!* Can we say the car is important but not the fuel? *That would be insane!* So likewise, to say that doctrine is not important, we need love; but under the guise of love, that’s how Satan gets

everyone! How about the teenager who falls madly in love and commits fornication? *Love is more important than anything else in the world!* But the doctrine of and the teaching of ‘*you shall not commit adultery*’ is part of love. So, that kind of love is not love, it’s *lust* misspelled *love*. That’s how Satan gets people, because:

- if it erodes true doctrine, it’s going to erode belief
- if you erode belief, you erode faith
- if you erode faith, you do not have the weapons to fight Satan the devil

Ephesians 6:10: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in *the* Lord, and in the might of His strength.... [you can’t do it on your own] ...Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (vs 10-11).

He has had millenniums of experience; however, God is eternal. So, if we go by the power of God, we have the power of eternity against the millenniums of experience. And the wiles are clever!

Verse 12: “Because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities *and* against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual *power* of wickedness in high *places*.”

That’s why they have worldliness in the Church, like it is in James 4. They became so worldly that they’re fighting, arguing, quarrelling, killing, lusting, cheating, stealing and lying! Later on he says that they’re ‘talking against each other’ in such a way that they’re judging the law, *judging God! And, brethren, I submit that’s the state of most of the Church of God today!* Unfortunately! Maybe not in this congregation to that degree, but none of us can ever say that we’re perfect. *No! No, we won’t be until the resurrection!* Keep that in mind; that’s why we need to *put on the whole armor of God!* It’s not just a physical battle out here that we’re fighting.

Verse 13: “Therefore, take up the whole armor of God so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having worked out all things, to stand.”

Then it says what we’re to do. I think the greatest weakness that happens to us is that we are in such a busy world that we get too busy to really pray the way that we ought to. I submit *that is the biggest weakness that every one of us can have*, or if we pray too many times and we end up like it is here: *you ask and do not receive* because you just want it for yourself. Too many times! So, what we need to do is put on the ‘whole armor of God’; put on that armor of prayer and put on the armor that’s listed here.

Verse 14: “Stand therefore, having your loins girded about with Truth, and wearing the breastplate of righteousness, and having your feet shod with *the* preparation of the Gospel of peace. Besides all *these*, take up the shield of the faith...” (vs 14-16). That’s how we resist him; resist him in the faith; fight him in the faith by the Word of Truth.

“...with which you will have the power to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one; and put on the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; praying at all times with all prayer and supplication in *the* Spirit...” (vs 16-18).

So it has to be all together. That’s why when you see a flood, water is going to seek out everything where there’s a weakness. That’s why levees break. A little trickle, then leads to a burst. What does it say that the devil is going to do speaking of water and floods? Go back to and it says that after the Church has fled, those that are taken to a place of safety, water is cast out of the serpent’s mouth as a flood that he might cause her to be carried away with the flood’ (Rev. 12:15)

We can take that in principle. We are getting an absolute flood and deluge of false doctrine! We’re getting an absolute flood and deluge of problems within the Church, problems within the ministry, problems within our own lives and marriages because of the deluge of the flood that is coming out from Satan. We need to recognize that. That’s why James 4 is so fantastic, because it tells us then how to fight these things.

James 4:7—contains the first two commandments of coming out of the world: “Therefore, submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” It doesn’t mean he won’t be back another day. But he will flee from you.

### **Commandment #3:**

Verse 8: “**Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you....**” This is available to everyone. God has not restricted this to anyone. I would hate to have been Paul. We do not have a concept of paganism, except once in a while we see a movie that fairly well represents it. Paganism where Paul went in Athens was so absolutely incredible! All of those temples, all of the gods, no one knew anything about the true God. Everyone worships Satan.

This series called *Legacy*: What this man does is survey the beginnings of the religions of this world. He starts in Babylon and then he goes to China, to India, to the Mayans in South America, then the American Indians and back over to the Europeans, and the Europeans are the big bad guys



again. However, in his series in India—incredible! The heart and core and sole of the Indian religion is *demonism and Satan worship and phallic worship*. At the center of their innermost shrine that they worship is a *black rock that is a phallic symbol*, which they adorn with spices and incense and flowers and it is the homage that is given. Of course, I need not tell you where that came from.

This is the kind of world that Paul went preaching in. As I saw that, I thought: How would I preach to those people? I mean, here in America we have a comparatively easy chore compared to that. How could I reach these people? Well, Paul had a way that he did, showing that even to those pagans, the way is open.

Acts 17:22: “Then Paul stood in *the* center of Mars Hill... [one of their gods right at the temple] ...*and* said, ‘Men, Athenians, I perceive *that* in all things you are very reverent to deities; for *as* I was passing through and observing the objects of your veneration, I also found an altar on which was inscribed, “To an unknown God.”....’” (vs 22-23). In other words, ‘We know every god there is except one, that’s the unknown one.’]

“...So then, He Whom you worship in ignorance *is* the one *that* I proclaim to you. He *is* the God Who made the world and all things that *are* in it. Being *the* Lord of heaven and earth, He does not dwell in temples made by hands; nor is He served by the hands of men, as *though* He needs anything, *for* He gives to all life and breath and all things” (vs 23-25).

This ties in very clearly with *judging one another’s hearts* is not what we ought to do. That doesn’t mean that we cannot sin. We ought to condemn sin, God does and tells us to repent. But, on the other hand, here Paul is saying that God is giving everything to everyone.

Verse 26: ““And He made of one blood all the nations of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth, having determined beforehand *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their dwelling; in order that **they might seek the Lord**...” (vs 26-27).

That’s part of overcoming. If you’ve been walking out into the world too far then you need to come back and seek God.

“...if perhaps they might feel after Him and might find Him; though truly, He is not far from each one of us” (v 27).

So, I submit to you that God is a whole lot closer than we would like to recollect. And besides, space and time in eternity do not affect God—do they? *No!* So He’s near to everyone of us—right?

Verse 27: “In order that **they might seek the Lord** if perhaps they might feel after Him and might find Him; though truly, He is not far from each one of us, for in Him we live...” (vs 27-28).

I want to emphasize again, *there isn’t one thing, brethren, that we have that God did not give one way or the other, not a single, solitary thing!* He created the world all that in there is. He created all human beings and all of us are made of one blood so that we may seek after Him.

Verse 28: “For in Him we live and move and have our being; as some of the poets among you also have said, ‘For we are His offspring.’” We’re made in the image of God, a little lower than Elohim.

Verse 29: “Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we should not think that the Godhead *is* like that which *is made of* gold, or silver, or stone—a graven thing of art *devised by the* imagination of man; for *although* God has indeed overlooked the times of this ignorance, He now commands all men everywhere to repent” (vs 28-30). So does He not then give a way out? *Yes!* That is called *the grace of God!*

We like to get to ‘important’ things, like the Epistles of Paul and the sayings of Jesus, but I tell you one thing, after going through and studying the book of James, I can see one thing, *it goes right to the heart and core of human nature very quickly!* It says the things to us that our human nature does not like to hear.

Psalms 119:150: “They draw near, those who follow after wickedness; they are far from Your Law. **You are near**, O LORD, and all Your commandments are Truth” (vs 150-151).

- God is near!
- His commandments are near!
- His commandments are true!
- His way is righteous!

—without a single doubt!

Isaiah 55:6: “Seek the LORD while He may be found... [because there may be a time when He may not be found] ...call upon Him while He is near.... [there is a time when we may drive Him far away from us because of our sins] ...Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (vs 6-7). *That’s how God is giving more grace!*

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) James 4:1-12, 16-17
- 2) Hebrews 3:12-14
- 3) Revelation 3:14-21
- 4) James 4:6
- 5) Acts 7:51-54, 58
- 6) 2 Timothy 3:8-9
- 7) Romans 9:19-20
- 8) James 4:6-7, 10
- 9) 1 Peter 5:5-9
- 10) Matthew 23:2-3, 12
- 11) Isaiah 57:15
- 12) Isaiah 66:1-2
- 13) Philippians 2:7-8
- 14) James 4:7
- 15) John 17:15
- 16) Ephesians 6:10-18
- 17) James 4:7
- 18) Acts 17:22-30
- 19) Psalm 119:150-151
- 20) Isaiah 55:6-7

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 17
- Jeremiah 17:9
- Psalm 51
- Matthew 25
- 1 Corinthians 3
- Romans 8:7
- Numbers 11
- John 16:27
- Hebrews 12
- Matthew 4
- Luke 4
- Matthew 6:12-17
- Revelation 12:15

Also referenced:

Sermons/Sermons Series:

- *The Truth of the Passover*
- *Who is Jesus?*
- *Satan's Ten Most Believable Lies*

Books:

- *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten* by Robert Fulghum
- *Satan's Ten Most Believable Lies* by David Breese
- *The Lies We Believe* by Chris Thurman

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## Epistle of James X Ten Commandments to Overcome Worldliness #2

Fred R. Coulter

Today we're going to cover something very unusual in the Epistle of James. Many people don't realize it, but there are supposed to be 54<sup>[corrected]</sup> commands in the whole Epistle of James. We're not going to cover 54 of those today, but what we want to focus in on is the *Ten Commandments to Overcome Worldliness*. In other words, how does a Christian come out of being so worldly and living in the way that the world lives. How are they able to retrieve themselves out their difficulties and problems. Given the whole span of life in the things that we go through and do, that certainly is something that happens—and it happens to quite a few people. Some just get discouraged and give up and figure, 'well, you know this isn't happening, God isn't with me' and they just run off back into the world.

This is the important thing always to remember, always keep in mind, James 4:6 (KJV): "But he gives **more grace**..." In other words, God's grace is greater than your sins. The only sin grace does not cover is the unpardonable sin. We will see one of the kings of Israel to see how grossly he sinned, but was able to be retrieved out of that sin.

"...Wherefore he said, 'God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves, therefore, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. Speak not evil one of another, brethren, He that speaks evil of his brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the Law, and judges the Law; but if you judge the Law, you are not a doer of the Law but a judge'" (vs 6-11).

Then he goes on to say there is only one Lawgiver, Who is God. So, if you judge the Law, for whatever reason, then you are judging God. If you judge God then you are sitting in the seat of God and God is not God, *you're God!* You can apply this principle to many, many different things. Some people say:

- O, Lord, I love my ham. Praise the Lord, I found a place in the Bible where I can eat my ham.
- I love your commandments, but I've got to have my idol.
- O, Lord, I like the principle of one day off

from the week, so I'll keep Sunday.

- O, Lord, adultery applies to everyone else, but I have a real need.

All of that is judging the Law of God and you're sitting in the seat of God! That's what the world does all the time. They sit in God's seat and say, 'You don't need the Bible, you don't need this; why do you need that?'

Let's concentrate on these *Ten Commandment to Overcome Worldliness* if you've been entrapped in it. We have covered the first three, so we will review those just a little bit.

Verse 6 (FV): "But He gives **greater grace**..."—present tense, he is giving. God is the One Who is the Giver. Always remember that the only creatures of all of God's creation designed to receive grace *are human beings*, because we need it.

"...This is the reason it says, 'God sets Himself against *the* proud...' (v 6). He's not going to give grace to the proud. He's not going to give grace to someone who is big in his own eyes, or someone who is judging God—that's the height of pride.

"...but He gives grace to *the* humble" (v 6). He's saying that if you want this grace, here's what you need to do.

### Ten Commandments to Overcome Worldliness:

1. "Therefore, **submit yourselves to God**..." (v 7)
2. "...**Resist the devil**, and he will flee from you." (v 7)

We're moving from one frame of mind and behavior to a different frame of mind and behavior in each one of these things.

3. "**Draw near to God**, and He will draw near to you..." (v 8).

A lot of people say, 'I wonder where God is? God didn't stop me from doing this.' Well, if you're far from God, He isn't going to help you at all. You've got to draw near to God.

4. "**Cleanse your hands**, you sinners..." (v 8)
5. "...and **purify your hearts**, you double-minded!" (v 8)
6. "**Be grieved and mourn and weep**..." (v 9)
7. "...let your **laughter be turned into grieving**..." (v 9)
8. "...and **your joy into mourning**." (v 9)
9. "**Humble yourselves** before the Lord, and

- He will exalt you.” (v 10)  
10. “Brethren, **do not talk against one another...**” (v 11)

Those are the *Ten Commandment to Overcome Worldliness*. Then also it comes full circle, but now that you do this you don’t begin elevating yourself above others by comparing your righteousness with theirs and you talk against them.

When we are all done, we will see how these are all put together in such a way that it forms a whole picture of repentance and drawing close to God.

**Commandment #1—“Therefore, submit yourselves to God...”**

If you want to subject yourself to God, you’re putting down the proud, you want to receive God’s presence with you. You draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Here’s the final conclusion of it:

Isaiah 57:15: “For thus says the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity; Whose name is Holy; ‘I dwell in the high and Holy place, even with the one who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.’”

That’s how God draws close to you. ***You first have to draw close to God!*** God sends His Spirit to call you. God sends His Spirit to convict you in heart and mind, but then you have to draw close to God.

**Commandment #2—“...Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”**

**Commandment #3—“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you...”**

Eph. 6 talks about the whole armor of God, and we will see what that is based upon. You can’t fight the devil yourself. You can’t overcome him yourself. There is no person in the world that has the ability to do so. If you think you can, then you are going to succumb to the devil in a different trap, in a different plan, through a different lust, because there are many avenues into a person’s personality to where Satan can pull that trigger and know how to get to you.

Even in the Bible, it shows all of the sins of all of even those that God has called. These things are here for our instruction that we do not do as they do. But we have to rely on God.

Ephesians 6:10: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in *the Lord*...” If you draw near to God and He draws near to you, then you can be strong in the Lord. Then, if you resist the devil with the power of God, then he’s got to flee from you. It all fits

together. There are a lot of people who think that James was, on one hand, fighting against the doctrine of Paul.

I just read a book this morning called *The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception*. That is put in as one of the scenarios that they have in trying to explain about it. I just really could understand how much mental gymnastics that a lot of these scholars do. First of all, they don’t know the Bible. Second of all, they just read it for it’s surface meaning. They don’t try and harmonize the teachings of Paul and the teachings of James, and they do harmonize together. This fits exactly here with what James is telling us. This is the writing of Paul.

Verse 10: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in *the Lord*, and in the might of His strength.” Then he goes on to describe all of the things that we need to do to resist the devil:

Verse 11: “Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” That we have:

- the Word of God in our mind
- the helmet of God on our head
- the Gospel which protects us as a shield
- the sword of the Lord which is the Word of God, the Spirit of God
- and we’re able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil

What we’re going to see is that you can’t take one of these commandments and sit it over here and say it’s not connected with the rest. You start out with you submit to God, draw near to Him, and then right at the end it says humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord. All of those tie in together.

Psalms 119:150—talking about the wicked: “They draw near, those who follow after wickedness; they are far from Your Law.” In other words, they are out there transgressing and breaking God’s Law. This also equates with the more you’re transgressing the laws and commandments of God the further the way you are away from Him.

Verse 151: “You are near, O LORD, and all Your commandments are Truth.” You can ‘take it to the bank’—it’s sure! We’ll take that home to *the bank of faith*, because that is sure!

Psalms 119:10: “With all my heart I have sought You... [that’s how we’re to seek God] ...O let me not wander from Your commandments.” This is one of the most wonderful Psalms in the whole Bible, and it actually shows the converted attitude toward:

- the commandments of God
- the laws of God
- statutes of God

- the judgments of God

**Commandment #4—“Cleanse your hands, you sinners...”**

Why does he say, ‘cleanse your hands’? Is that you have dirt on it? You have dirty hands? Is it like the scribes and Pharisees, you have to wash your hands when you come back from the market? Does that make you a sinner? *No!* The reason why it says ‘cleanse your hands’ is *because your hands are the thing that performs the sin!*

That’s where sin begins! What you do you first start with the outward sins that you are doing and you stop them and you ‘cleanse your hands.’

Psalms 119:9: “With what shall a young man cleanse his way?...” The way that he’s doing with his hands. Hands are symbolic of your work, your actions, the things that you do.

“...By taking heed according to Your Word” (v 9). We’re reading part of the Word of God and what to do to come out of worldliness.

Whatever your problem is with worldliness—be it smoking, drinking, breaking the Sabbath, not keeping the Holy Days, a bad attitude, whatever it may be—follow these ten commandments to get back to God. Remember, *the grace is there*, and here’s how you start: You cleanse your hands and cleanse your way by taking heed, that is paying attention to and following the Word of God. That’s why it says, “...cleanse your hands...”

We find in Isa. 1 how all of these things tie in together, Isaiah 1:2: “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken, ‘I have reared and brought up children, but they have rebelled against Me.’”

Verse 4: “Ah, sinful nation, a people burdened *with* iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children who deal corruptly!... [look at the intensity of these sins] ...They have forsaken the LORD; they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger; they have gone away backward.”

A common terminology that we use in the New Testament similar to that is called ‘backsliding.’ *Backsliding into worldliness* is what we’re talking about. Here we’re looking at gross sin in this particular case. The reason I’m covering this is to show you that regardless of what your situation is there is hope!

Verse 16: “**Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;** put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil.”

That all ties in with *cleanse your hands*. These are all outward actions that you can do. Then

with the heart; you just can’t clean the outside, you’ve got to also clean the *inside*. That’s why James says, “Cleanse your hands, you sinners...” and then he says, “purify your hearts, you double-minded!” Because if you have your mind on God with one part of your brain, and you have your mind on the world and sin with the other part of your brain, you’re double-minded! You have two loyalties and no man can ‘serve two masters.’

Verse 17: “Learn to do good... [also part of the mental] ...seek judgment... [seek those things that are right] ...reprove the oppressor. Judge the orphan, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together,” says the LORD. ‘Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient...’ (vs 17-19).

That ties in with James. It’s almost like James was condensing the teachings that we find here in Isaiah and writing them in his epistle; could very well be.

Notice that it is conditional, v 19: “If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured *with* the sword;’ for the mouth of the LORD has spoken *it*” (vs 19-20).

So, always, as God does, He sets choices before us: We’re to choose the good—which we can; or choose the evil, which God will let us do. A lot of people say, ‘Well, God allowed it.’ In many cases that’s a copout. *NO!* God didn’t stop it, but that doesn’t mean that God allowed it. It means you or I chose it and God didn’t stop us from it. Don’t ever say God allowed, that’s just a copout for responsibility. That is really not something that should be or put in that particular way.

The Psalms are full of so many things that are important for us to know and understand in growing, changing, overcoming, learning to pray and all of those things. This is all part of *cleansing our hands* and *cleansing our way*, because if you cleanse your hands—which are the physical agents to do sin—then you must also cleanse your way in which you are walking, that you’re no longer going to walk in sin.

Isaiah 52:11: “Depart! Depart! Go out from there! Touch not the unclean. Go out of her midst; purify yourself, you who bear the vessels of the LORD.” The Apostle Paul quotes this in 2-Cor. 4 where it also likens it to us. We are not go out and putting our hands into sin. *All sin is uncleanness!*

We can apply this in many different ways. We can take this Scripture—“Cleanse your hands you sinners...” and think of so many different things that we can do. it also ties in with the tenth

commandment, 'speak not against your brother'; because you're pointing of accusation. If you point the finger of accusation then your hand is dirty with accusations. You see how right down to earth, in everyday practical in changing and growing and overcoming that James is telling us here in the Epistle of James. I'm sure that you have found, as I have found, that the Epistle of James is really a very powerful epistle with so many things for us to learn and grow and change and overcome.

Here's how we are to cleanse, not only our hands, but our whole spiritual being as it were—the same way the Jesus does the Church. This is comparing marriage, husband and wife, with the Church and Christ, and it shows what Jesus is doing for the Church, and how He is cleansing the Church. Obviously, we're not talking about just soap and water. Obviously we're talking about the *spiritual* things.

Ephesians 5:25: "Husbands, love your own wives, in the same way that Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; so that He might sanctify it, having cleansed *it* with the washing of water by *the Word*" (vs 25-26).

This is why Bible study is so important. I'll guarantee you one thing that's really true—I've experience it and I've seen it, and you have, too—when you don't study and you don't pray that's when you sin! Then when you sin, you're not too inclined to come back to God, because you're ashamed that you've sinned and you haven't studied and you haven't prayed. It's kind of the catch-22 treadmill of worldliness, and it sort of perpetuates itself. That's why ***you need the Word of God to cleanse you!*** That's why it starts out 'submit yourselves, therefore, to God.' Recognize that you're a sinner and repent.

**Commandment #5—"...and purify your hearts, you double-minded!"**

Aren't we amazed as we've been going through this series how much of the Epistle of James goes right back to the Sermon on the Mount, right back to the teachings of Jesus in the book of Matthew. You might want to do this for an independent study yourself, go through the book of Matthew and just compile all the things that relate directly to the whole Epistle of James. If someone would go ahead and do that and send it to me, maybe I could go ahead and compile it and have it there as part of the Bible study in the final analysis.

This is always true and this is why people come up with 'double-mindedness.' You can't serve the world *and* God at the same time, because in the world you're going to do as the world. If you're going to serve God, you have to do it *His way*.

Matthew 6:24: "No one is able to serve two masters... [It's not possible. You can for a while, but]: ...for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to *the* one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.... [mammon not only means money, but it also means the things of the world] ...Because of this I say to you, do not be anxious about your life *as to* what you shall eat and what you shall drink; nor about your body *as to* what you shall wear. Is not life *more* than food, and the body more than clothing?" (vs 24-25).

I saw something that was very interesting. I cam across Pat Robertson's 700 Club. He does a fairly good job on quite a few things, but he was interviewing a minister who worked in the black ghettos and was trying to help solve the problems of the ghetto, which is men who promulgate illegitimate children, men who do not marry the children, women who do not marry the men. All of that breeds poverty. You want to know why there's so much poverty in any ghetto, not just black, anyone, because there's sin and not being responsible!

He said that when he leads them to Christ—they repent and they change and they follow God's way, they let God clean up their lives, they marry the women that they should marry, the women marry the men that they should marry and rear and train the children in the way that they ought to, guess what miracle takes place? *In three years they are completely out of poverty!* They're not rich, they're out of poverty; they're off welfare; they are off the dole.

This applies: If you truly seek Christ, He will take care of all of these things—won't He? But you've got to apply yourself. There's a very good example. Let's see another example of this. This shows where sin originates. That's why you have to purify your mind. Sin originates in the mind. That's why the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment is '***You shall not covet.***' That is telling you are responsible for your own mind, and that sin begins in the mind. Jesus brings that out here:

Matthew 5:27: "You have heard that it was said to those *in ancient times*, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you, everyone who looks upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (vs 27-28). Being a Christian our minds then are to be purified! How are they to be purified?

- with the Word of God
- by the washing of the water by the Word
- by the Holy Spirit of God

All of those things together, to where then we

become responsible and we put these things out of our mind. We train ourselves through the Holy Spirit and the Word of God not to get involved in that kind of thing; not to be in situations where that could even arise.

Let's cover some more on this and see what we can learn about purifying our hearts because that's where sin originates and let's see what the religious leaders did.

I saw on 20/20 the other night where they were talking about the 'end-timers.' Have you ever heard of the 'End-Timers'? The 'End-Timers' are those who went down into Lake City, Florida, and they've got a big compound there and they're the only ones that know the 'Truth' and they must obey their leader, whose name is Brother Meade. They completely cut themselves off from the whole world totally. That is going to end up being a total disaster and disgrace for any form of Christianity, and people will say, 'See! See! All you Christians are nuts out there.' But what do most religious leaders do? Same as that Brother Meade, same as the Pharisees, etc.! It brings on problems and difficulties.

Matthew 23:25: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!.... [sanctimonious pretenders] ...For you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but within you are full of extortion and excess." Yes, they would clean their hands, but unless you clean your hands and purify your mind—as James says—then you're going to be just as the Pharisees.

Verse 26: "Blind Pharisees! First cleanse the inside of the cup and the dish, so that the outside may also become clean. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whited sepulchers [graves], which indeed appear beautiful *on the outside*, but within are full of the bones of the dead, and of all uncleanness. Likewise, you also outwardly appear to men *to be* righteous, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness" (vs 26-28). They are 'double-minded; they profess with their mouth they are serving God, but they're not! All of those things apply.

Now, let's look at the human heart, and this is what needs to be changed. This is why James says that God is giving greater grace. God is able to overcome all of these things within human beings if they truly change. But they've got to turn to God!

Mark 7:21: "For from within, out of the hearts of men... [that's why James says purify your heart you double-minded] ...go forth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickednesses, guile, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evils..." (vs 21-23).

If you want to know what sin is, sin goes beyond just the Ten Commandments. It even covers:

- an evil eye
- pride
- foolishness

*as well as the overt sins of*

- murder
- fornication
- adultery

"...all these evils go forth from within, and *these* defile a man." (v 23). So, the whole character that James is telling us is that it doesn't do any good just to do *the hands*, or as Jesus said, *the outside*; ***you must also do the inside!*** This is what will come from within unless the Spirit of God is there and the Word of God to cleanse it and to purify your heart.

Let's see the repentance Psalm 51, and this shows that the Bible is consistent all the way through. There are times when people say that you can't trust the Bible because it contradicts itself here and there. The problem with that sort of thing is they don't understand the Bible, or that *their view* of it is just on the surface, so it looks like a contradiction, but it's not! Psalms 51 agrees exactly with what James is teaching.

Psalm 51:10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God..." God is the One Who has to create it. After all, isn't that the whole purpose of the New Covenant? Isn't that what God said? 'Behold the days come that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. I will put My laws into their hearts and minds; in their inward parts.' ***All of God's way has to be created in us, and it is a clean heart!***

Verse 10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." This is talking about the repentance of David after his sin with Bathsheba; so you know that this is real repentance! What he's saying here is that *this is the only way* that it's going to be done.

Verse 11: "Cast me not away from Your presence..." He's coming back to God very humble and repentant. Where was he? *He was far from God!*

"...and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and let *Your* free spirit uphold me" (vs 11-12).

We'll talk about joy in the book of James, because he also talks about that in relationship to sin.

1-John 1:7: "However, if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin.**" *The blood of Jesus Christ is cleansing us from every sin!* See

how that ties right in with Psalms 51: 'create in me a clean heart, O God.' That's what conversion is all about.

**Commandment #6—"Be grieved and mourn and weep..."**

This is repentance! This is describing the action of repentance, so you could classify this as repentance. Let's see how this repentance is very, very important. After he said that Jesus Christ will "...cleanse us from all sins," and the very fact that you want to repent over it means that it is a cleansable sin.

Verse 8: "If we say that we do not have sin..." In other words, you're not repentant; you're not confessing your sins; you're not getting rid of your sins.

"...we are deceiving ourselves... [we are lying to ourselves] ...and the Truth is not in us" (v 8). That's part of the 'double-mindedness.'

Verse 9: "If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." So, you see how one step leads to the next step, leads to the next step.

Verse 10: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us."

Let's see the whole repentance of David, and you can actually take Psalm 51 and you could break it down into the *Ten Commandment to Overcome Worldliness* that we find in James 4.

- Is this not returning to God?
- Is this not coming back to God?
- Is this not resisting the devil?
- Is this not fleeing from the devil?
- Is this not cleansing his hands?
- Is this not purifying his heart?

Psalm 51:1: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions." Yes, we want them blotted out; God will forgive them and cover them, provided that you repent. Look at David's attitude here.

Verse 2: "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity... [not just the hands, not just the mind alone, but thoroughly] ...and cleanse me from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me: (vs 2-3).

- Don't you think that David was weeping?
- Don't you think that he was mourning?
- Don't you think that he was grieving?

- *Yes!*

You find in the account of his repentance that *he fasted for a whole week and prayed on his face*, trying to plead with God that the baby wouldn't die. The sentence was that the baby was going to die. God did not answer that prayer, because God had already given the judgment. He said that the child is going to die. But later, in God's mercy, the next child of Bathsheba was Solomon and he became the king to succeed David.

Verse 4: "Against You, You only, have I sinned..." Think of it for a minute:

- he sinned against Bathsheba
- he sinned against the new child
- he sinned against Uriah the Hittite, the husband of Bathsheba
- he sinned against God
- he sinned against Israel

But, when you get down to it, why does he say, "Against You, You only, have I sinned..."? *Because:*

- God is the One Who is the Lawgiver!
- God is the One Who gave the Law!
- God is the One Who's sitting there in judgment!

Ultimately, though you sin against other people, which is true, ultimately every sin is against God! You have to realize that and understand that; every sin is against God!

"...and done evil in Your sight... [He saying, 'I'm confessing all of this, God] ...that You might be justified when You speak and be in the right when You judge.... [then he talks about his own nature]: ...Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (vs 4-5).

(go to the next track)

Notice what he said about his own nature, v 5: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." That's not saying his mother sinned in conceiving him, but that sin was inherent in him from the time that he was conceived. That is New Testament doctrine: 'the law of sin and death' *resides in every human being*. That's why all sin! That's why 'all have come short of the glory of God.' So, what we need to do is ask God to create in us this new nature, ask God to change our heart and mind. *We also need the control of the sin that is within us*, which only God can give.

Here's how to do it, v 6: "Behold, You desire Truth in the inward parts..." What is Truth? *God's Word is Truth!* That's what to fill your heart and mind with!



One of the best ways to overcome worldliness is to replace the thoughts of worldliness with the thoughts of God, with His Word. Let it wash and cleanse your mind, as it should.

“...and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop... [like a scouring pad—scrub, cleanse and get rid of] ...and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (vs 6-7). Doesn’t that tie right in with Isa. 1:16-19? *Yes, it does!* Ties in there exactly, perfectly, the same wordage and the same terminology.

Verse 8: “Make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones, which You have broken, may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the **joy of Your salvation...**” (vs 8-12).

Why? Because he had the joy of sin and now he wants the joy of God’s salvation! He was enjoying Bathsheba! He was enjoying the sin! And that turned to sorrow and bitterness and cursing and condemning. Now he’s saying, ‘God, I’ve had enough of that! **“Restore to me the joy of Your salvation...”**’

Acts 2—here’s one of the basic, first Scriptures that you probably ever heard in your life when it finally came to your attention what you need to do to make yourself right with God. And it’s still true today! What is so absolutely important with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is this: ***It is the continually atoning propitiation!***

- **expiation**—to remove or atone in a one-time action; to expiate
- **propitiate** means a continuous means of removing of sin, of forgiving of sin

The sacrifice of Christ applies to us today as it did the very first time you heard this preached:

Acts 2:37: “Now, after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart; and they said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?’” So, the very first message that Peter preached was almost identical to the *Ten Commandments to Overcome Worldliness*.

Verse 38: “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized each one of you... [Is not baptizing a cleansing? *Yes, it is!*] ...in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’”

So, when it says there in that commandment: ***be grieved and mourn, and weep***, it means you go to God, you confess your sins. You weep, you cry,

you mourn—and then it goes into the next one: “...let your laughter be turned into grieving...” and right into the next one: “...and your joy into mourning.”

### **Commandment #7—“...let your laughter be turned into grieving...”**

- Why?
- What kind of laughter is this talking about?
- Is this a commandment against laughter?
- Is James saying, ‘Don’t you ever laugh; you’ve got to go around and you can never laugh at anything’?

***NO!***

- this is talking about the laughter of sin
- this is talking about the joy of sin

The next time you go into a restaurant and there’s a bar there, listen to all the laughing and the hilarity that’s going on. ***That is the laughter and joy of this world!*** That kind of laughter and joy needs to be turned into grieving.

Ecclesiastes tells us very clearly about this kind of wrong joy, this kind of laughter and sin, this kind of hilarity of filthiness. A lot of the comics that you see on television fit right into this. Most of the things that they talk about, and most of their jokes—not all, but most; especially those that have to do about adultery and fornication and homosexuality and all of this—are *all the laughter of sin!* This is what James is saying that we need to turn into grieving.

Solomon said that he was going to experiment in everything that there was to experiment in the world, partly because he didn’t believe God.

Ecclesiastes 2:1: “I said in my heart, ‘Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.’ and, behold, this also *is* vanity. I said of laughter, ‘*It is* madness,’ and of mirth, ‘What does it accomplish?’ I sought in my heart to give myself unto wine, yet, conducting my heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly... [foolishness and stupidity] ... until I might see what was good for the sons of men, what they should do under the heaven the few days of their life” (vs 1-3).

So, he said, ‘Well, we’re made to laugh, we’re made to have joy, so let’s have a ball! Let’s have a blast! ***That’s part of worldliness!*** That’s exactly what he did! Let’s see the conclusion; let’s see what he says this kind of laughter does. What we’re actually seeing is where James undoubtedly, from the Word of God, got this principle and put it into the *Ten Commandment to Overcome Worldliness*.

Ecclesiastes 7:2: “*It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting...* [Why? Because you can learn some purpose in life!] ... for that *is* the end of all men; and the living will lay *it* to his heart. Sorrow *is* better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better” (vs 2-3). ***This is repentance!***

Another place he says, in the Proverbs, that ***‘laughter is healing to the soul.’*** It’s joy when it’s the good kind of laughter, and the good kind of joy. What we’re talking about here in repenting is the bad kind, the sinful kind.

Verse 4: “The heart of the wise *is* in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools *is* in the house of pleasure. *It is* better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools” (vs 4-5).

This is exactly what we’re talking about. If you want to see the laughter and hilarity of stupidity, turn on Arsenio Hall sometime. Turn on your joke channel sometime. You will see that that’s the kind of stuff to repent of. That’s what James is talking about here in ***‘grieving and mourning and laughter be turned to grieving.’***

### **Commandment #8—“...and your joy into mourning.”**

Let’s see how that applies. This is the wrong kind of joy. Let’s really be honest about this whole thing as we’re looking at it. Do we not train our children to laugh at sin? *Think about it!* How do we start them out? *On cartoons!* The hit! The slap! To kill! To shoot! To drop! To throw! To lie! To sneak! To steal! And it’s all ‘funny’ cartoons! So, the world is full of it; it’s all the wrong kind!

Psalms 31:1: “In You, O LORD, have I taken refuge...” Trust! That’s what you need to do in your heaviness, in your gloominess and your sorrow and you repentance!

“...let me never be ashamed; deliver me in Your righteousness. Bow down Your ear to me; deliver me quickly...” (vs 1-2). In this attitude that you would be in:

- you’re repenting
- you’re seeking God
- you’re drawing close to Him
- you’re praying

“...be my strong Rock, a fortress of defense to save me; for You are my Rock and my fortress; therefore, for Your name’s sake lead me and guide me. Pull me up out of the net that they have hidden for me...” (vs 2-4).

All the trappings of Satan; all the things that

kept you in this. If you’ve been caught in the net of worldliness, you do the same thing. ***You ask God to help retrieve you out of that!***

“...for You are my strength. Into Your hand I commit My spirit... [the very words of Christ on the cross] ...You have redeemed me, O LORD God of Truth” (vs 4-5). So here it shows how this can be.

Hebrews 11—we will see what Moses did. There is pleasure in sin for a season. There is pleasure in doing wrong for a season. Just like today, so many people are on drugs and dope; yes, *there is a pleasure for a time!*

I just read in the paper this morning to where they found three young men dead in a pickup truck, which is the very epitome of what I’m talking about here. Guess what they were doing for their kicks? Guess what kind of drug they took? Innocent enough—or supposedly—they closed the doors on their pickup truck and they rolled up the windows so that nothing would escape and they had across their laps a tank of nitric oxide, which is ‘laughing gas.’ Here to have their laughter, to have their fun, their kicks, their high, laughing gas. I imagine they sat there and laughed and laughed.

Imagine you saw one of the Pink Panther movies with Detective Crusoe where they have one where he comes in with the laughing gas. He’s going to pull the tooth of this individual. They’re all laughing. Well, here these three men were in there in this pickup truck and I imagine they were laughing and having a hilarious time while they were breathing in all of this laughing gas and then BANG!

They didn’t have time to let their laughter turn to mourning. They didn’t have time to be grieving and be in heaviness. ***They died!*** That’s the kind of laughter it’s talking about here. That’s the kind of sin that this is talking about.

Talking about Moses; Moses had an opportunity, he was called Pharaoh’s son. Sometimes there are difficult choices for us. After all, laughing makes us feel good. People want to feel good.

- What’s wrong with feeling good in the Lord?
- What’s wrong with having joy in the Lord?

There’s enough sorrow in this world and we all carry enough sorrow that is true, but we have to make choices just like Moses did.

Hebrews 11:24: “By faith Moses, after becoming a great *leader*, refused to be called *the* son of Pharaoh’s daughter.” He had to make a choice; that’s what all of these things are here for us—***choices!***

Verse 25: “Choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy *the* temporary pleasure of sin.” We could just say ‘Amen’ 10,000 times over for this age in which we live.

I know that we’re living in a difficult time. Perhaps the worst time for Christians to survive that there has ever been, because the judgment of God is not being executed in vengeance, because He’s storing it all up for the Day of Vengeance. This frustrates us! Because having to live *in* the world and not *of* the world, we see all of these things going on and we wonder: What is God doing? *God is doing nothing, because He’s storing it all up! He’s going to save it for the end!* We have a choice to make, just like Moses did.

Verse 26: “For he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt because he was looking intently to the reward.... [he forsook Egypt]: ...By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king...” (vs 26-27).

**Commandment #9—“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you.”**

This ties right back into the first commandment. How do humble yourself? *One of the best ways of humbling yourself is exalting God!*

- God is exalted
- God is Holy
- God is true
- God is righteous
- God is great
- God is good

What are we, as human beings? *Even the very best thing that we could possibly ever do is nothing compared to anything that God can do!* We need to keep that in mind; we need to understand that.

Psalms 66:5: “Come and see the works of God; He is awesome in His deeds toward the sons of men. He turned the sea into dry land; they... [the children of Israel] ...went through the river on foot; there we rejoiced in Him. He rules by His power forever...” (vs 5-7). ***Exalt God!***

One of the way you humble yourself is not only to repent, to weep, mourn and be grieving because of your sins, but to exalt God:

- that God is righteous
- that God is Holy
- that God is perfect
- that God is love
- that God is all of these fantastic, marvelous and magnificent things

—because that’s what He is! And that humbles you! That’s why it says in Psalms 19—***“the heavens declare the glory of God.”*** They do! Fantastic! Marvelous!

Psalms 145:1—speaking of exalting God first: “I will extol You, my God, O King... [he’s exalting God] ...and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You; and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable” (vs 1-3).

We can live our whole lives and we can know just a teeny, minuscule about God’s way and what He’s done and what He’s created. Just go out and look at the grass.

- Do you know how it grows? *No!*
- Do you know what makes it grow? *The sun and water!*
- But what makes it grow? *You don’t know!*
- How does that have life? *Because God gave it!*
- What makes a seed sprout? *God does!*
- How does it do it? *You don’t know!*

But you know if you put it in the ground and you put the water on it and it’s not freezing, but it’s warm and the sun comes out, it will grow and you will have a plant! Whatever that plant is, it produces its fruit. ***God did all of that!*** The smallest little, teeniest, tiniest little thing!

Verse 5: “I will speak of the glorious splendor of Your majesty and of Your wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of Your awesome works; and I will declare Your greatness. They shall pour forth the memory of Your great goodness and shall sing of Your righteousness” (vs 5-7).

Why is it important to exalt God? That’s when the true joy of God and the joy of salvation starts coming from God! Then you’re focusing on God and not yourself. You have repented of your sins.

- you have wept
- you have mourned
- you have grieved
- you’ve asked God to
- cleanse your hands
- cleanse your mind
- purify your heart

***Now you’re exalting God!***

Verse 8: “The LORD is gracious and full of compassion; slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. All Your works shall praise You, O LORD; and Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of

Your kingdom and talk of Your power, to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom” (vs 8-12).

This is a whole prophecy of the coming Kingdom of God on this earth. *What a tremendous and marvelous thing that is going to be!* God is not going to come down here and band-aid Babylon the Great. **No!** He’s going to destroy it! He is going to level it! Every mountain is going to be made into a valley, and every valley is going to be made into a mountain. All the cities are going to be destroyed. Man is going to be humbled and come crawling to His God, and say, ‘Oh, God, You alone have the way.’ That’s the attitude we all need to have right now.

Verse 12: “to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations” (vs 12-13).

There’s not one generations of human beings that is going to escape God’s way and responsibility to God. If they sin, they won’t escape sin. If they repent to God and accept the salvation of Jesus Christ they can be saved.

Verse 14: “The LORD upholds all who fall... [if you stumble into worldliness, God will pull you back] ...and raises up all who are bowed down.... [regardless of what your situation is He will help you] ...The eyes of all... [every living thing] ...wait upon You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all His ways and loving in all His works. The LORD is near unto all who call upon Him, unto all who call upon Him in Truth” (vs 14-18)—through repentance, grieving, mourning, the Word of God.

Verse 19: “He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry, and will save them. The LORD watches over all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy. My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, and let all flesh bless His Holy name forever and ever” (vs 19-21).

This Psalm I chose to go through to show how that in your repentance and in your sorrow you can come out of that by praising and exalting God.

### **Commandment #10—“Brethren, do not talk against one another....”**

This has more to do with the exalting of yourself by your own spiritual bootstraps of:

- how bad ‘so and so’ is

- how ‘good I am.
- Did you see them do this?
- Did you know that she had 2mm more makeup than is allowable
- Did you know she had such short hair or long hair

—or whatever it may be? Those may be, but don’t speak evil against brethren to make yourself better.

- Do you think you’re going to make yourself better in God’s eyes, that you condemn people who are sinning? **No!**
  - ✓ pray for them that they will quit sinning
  - ✓ pray for them that God would change their mind
  - ✓ you don’t have to speak evil of them
- What good is that going to do?
- Is it going to cause them to quit sinning, because you pick on them?
- Are you going to be in better standing before God because you’ve done so?

### ***Nonsense! It won’t work!***

What we need to do is all love God and all love one another, and then we’ll overcome that particular problem.

I want to show one of the kings of Israel and show how greatly he sinned and how he was able to repent and recover himself before God.

**This is the account of Ahab.** Ahab married Jezebel, the daughter of the high priest of Baal from Sidon. Jezebel was the one who had all the priests of Baal. Elijah was alone—he thought totally alone—before God. Then there was the three-and-a-half years of drought which took place, and then we have the tremendous confrontation between Elijah and the 400 prophets of Baal, and how God showed that *He* was God.

Now we come to 1-Kings 21 and the evil continues even more. We find that King Ahab, under the instigation of his wife Jezebel said, ‘Okay, I want this piece of property’ What he did, he took the piece of property and furthermore, had the man killed.

- Have you ever caused people to worship Baal? **No!**
- Have you ever married the daughter of the high priest of Baal? **No!**
- Have you ever caused idols to fill the land? **No!**
- Have you directly caused someone to die, deliberately, to go take their property and keep it for your own? **No!**

I bring this out because a lot of people don’t

understand that there is more grace to cover the sin, if you repent. It's not available to you if you don't repent. Here's what happened when he went to take possession of the land:

1-Kings 21:17: "And the Word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'Arise, go down to meet Ahab the king of Israel in Samaria. Behold, *he is* in the vineyard of Naboth where he has gone to possess it. And you shall speak to him, saying..." (vs 17-19).

Here's the judgment of God, direct from the very mouth of Elijah, one of the greatest prophets of God.

"...Thus says the LORD, 'Have you killed and also taken possession?' And you shall speak to him saying, 'Thus says the LORD, 'In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours.'" And Ahab said to Elijah, 'Have you found me, O my enemy?' And he answered, 'I have found *you* because you have sold yourself to work evil in the sight of the LORD.'" (vs 17-20). Not only was he out there in the world, he was out there eagerly with both hands doing what he was doing.

Verse 21: "'Behold, I will bring evil upon you and will utterly sweep you away... [you won't have anyone to inherit anything] ...and will cut off from Ahab him who pisses against the wall, both bond and free in Israel. And I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation with which you have provoked *Me* to anger, and made Israel to sin.' And the LORD also spoke of Jezebel saying, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel'" (vs 21-23). That's a tremendous sentence— isn't it? *It did happen!*

Verse 24: "'He who dies of Ahab in the city, the dogs shall eat. And he who dies in the field, the birds of the air shall eat.' But there was none like Ahab, who sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites did, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel" (vs 24-26).

And we could all say, 'Yes, Lord, Amen! He deserves every bit of it, because he did all these things and it's Your Word that comes out of Your mouth.' Notice what happened. Notice the power of choice. Notice what a person can do in his own mind before God. And I'm bringing this out from the point of view that you may have some sins that you need to repent of, but ***you've got to choose to repent*** of them just like Ahab did here. Lo and behold! Look what happened!

Verse 27: "Then it came to pass when Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes... [in repentance] ...and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth and walked softly." Just exactly what it says here in James 4.

Let's read these ***Ten Commandment to Overcome Worldliness*** and see how all of this is contained right here in the account of Ahab:

1. "Therefore, submit yourselves to God..."
2. "...Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
3. "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you..."
4. "Cleanse your hands, you sinners..."
5. "...and purify your hearts, you double-minded!"
6. "Be grieved and mourn and weep..."
7. "...let your laughter be turned into grieving..."
8. "...and your joy into mourning."
9. "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you."
10. "Brethren, do not talk against one another..."

What was Ahab's first attitude when he saw Elijah? He talked against him! 'Oh, you're my enemy.' Did not Ahab comply with everything here that James said? *Yes, he did! Absolutely, he did!*

Verse 27: "Then it came to pass when Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes and put sackcloth upon his flesh... [that's like wearing burlap] ...and fasted, and lay in sackcloth and walked softly.... [notice what happened when he drew near to God]: ...And the Word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'Do you see how Ahab humbles himself before Me?... [See what repentance and humility can do?] ...Because he humbles himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days. *But* in his son's days I will bring the evil upon his house'" (vs 27-28).

Can God turn back the evil of your own sins, which you're bringing upon yourself, if you repent as Ahab did? If you follow these ***Ten Commandment to Overcome Worldliness***? *Yes!* It's right there! *Yes, you can! Yes, it can be done!* You can come out of this world by following these ***Ten Commandment to Overcome Worldliness***—it is possible!

Do you think that Ahab had any hope up to this point? *No, he didn't!* But when he repented and changed:

- then there was *hope*
- then there was *repentance*
- then there was *forgiveness*

Showing the end result of all of this:

- that you may have fellowship with God
- that you may have fellowship with Jesus Christ
- that you may understand that your sins can be
  - ✓ forgiven
  - ✓ washed away
  - ✓ made white as snow
  - ✓ cleansed with the blood of Jesus Christ

1-John 1:7: “However, if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins...” (vs 7-9). Just like Ahab—‘Oh, Lord God, You were right’—

- rent his clothes
- repented
- put on sackcloth and ashes
- fasted
- prayed
- wept
- mourned
- grieved
- gave up the laughter of sin

Verse 9: “If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.... [Every sin!] ... If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us” (vs 9-10).

1-John 2:1: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin....” The object is to keep going toward God and His way, with His Spirit, that we’re not living in sin.

“...And *yet*, if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ *the* Righteous.”

- Did God not then advocate for Ahab when he repented? *Yes!*
- Do we not have Jesus Christ there to advocate for us when we repent?
- When we sin?
- *Yes!*

Verse 2: “And He is *the* propitiation for our sins... [continual atoning mercy seat; forgiveness for our sins] (unless we get the ‘big head’): ... and not for our sins only, but also for *the* sins of the whole world.”

**So, *yes you can redeem yourself from worldliness!* Here are the Ten Commandment to Overcome Worldliness! Go back and read them!**

James 4:6: “But He gives greater grace....

[cover your sins] ...This is the reason it says, ‘God sets Himself against *the* proud, but He gives grace to *the* humble.’”

Keep in mind everything we covered with King Ahab, you’ll see that that encapsulates everything that James is writing for us.

Verse 7: <sup>[#1]</sup>Therefore, submit yourselves to God. <sup>[#2]</sup>Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>[#3]</sup>Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. <sup>[#4]</sup>Cleanse *your* hands, you sinners, and <sup>[#5]</sup>purify *your* hearts, you double-minded! <sup>[#6]</sup>Be grieved and mourn and weep; <sup>[#7]</sup>let your laughter be turned into grieving, and <sup>[#8]</sup>*your* joy into mourning. <sup>[#9]</sup>Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you. <sup>[#10]</sup>Brethren, do not talk against one another....” (vs 6-11).

***Those are the Ten Commandment to Overcome Worldliness!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order—A Faithful Version* (except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1) James 4:6-11
- 2) Isaiah 57:15
- 3) Ephesians 6:10-11
- 4) Psalm 119:150-151, 10, 9
- 5) Isaiah 1:2, 4, 16-20
- 6) Isaiah 52:11
- 7) Ephesians 5:25-26
- 8) Matthew 6:24-25
- 9) Matthew 5:27-28
- 10) Matthew 23:25-28
- 11) Mark 7:21-23
- 12) Psalm 51:10-12
- 13) 1 John 1:7-10
- 14) Psalm 51:1-12
- 15) Acts 2:37-38
- 16) Ecclesiastes 2:1-3
- 17) Ecclesiastes 7:2-5
- 18) Psalm 31:1-5
- 19) Hebrews 11:24-27
- 20) Psalm 66:5-7
- 21) Psalm 145:1-3, 5-21
- 22) 1 Kings 21:17-28
- 23) 1 John 1:7-10
- 24) 1-John 2:1
- 25) James 4:6-11

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 2 Corinthians 4
- Psalm 19

Also referenced: Book:

*The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception* by Michael Baigent

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## Epistle of James XI Judging God and Judging the Law

Fred R. Coulter

This is a particular subject that I want to cover in a particular way, so we are not going to necessarily go to be focusing I on the book of James alone, but rather we are going to focus in on a topic contained in the book of James.

Let's review the ten commandments of *coming out of the world*, which ties right in with this. You have in your hands the letter of two more false prophets claiming to be the two witnesses.

James 4:11 "Brethren, do not talk against one another...." That means to be exalting yourself by portraying your righteousness as better than someone else's. This is a big problem that has caused a lot of difficulty within the Church.

"...The one who talks against a brother..." (v 11)—judging, criticizing and putting down for no apparent reason; and it also means judging and putting down by the thought that *you know* the other person's heart. In other words, you know what they're thinking. No one knows what anybody is thinking. **Only God knows!**

"...and judges his brother... [here's what I want to pick up on for today's sermon]: **...is speaking against the Law, and is judging the Law....**"

We are going to see that this is one of the greatest sins in the world, that the world is doing to God and that what people do in judging the hearts of people. Now, we're to 'know them by their fruits.' We can judge the fruits. We can judge the sin. We can see right and wrong compared to that, but not judge their heart. That has to be left to God.

"...But if you **judge the Law**... [What happens when you judge the law?] ...you are not a doer of *the Law*; rather, **you are a judge**." That's really an awful lot to think of when you understand it. We'll see some good examples of that.

Verse 12: "**But** there is *only one* Lawgiver Who has power to save and to destroy. **Who are you that you presume to judge another?**" There's an awful lot contained in here, but I want to focus in on *judging the Law*. If you are *judging the law*, then you are not a doer, but you are a judge. In rendering that decision, you are then

**judging God!** You need to think on that because that becomes very important. I will just say, that was Job's sin, *judging God!*

First you start by talking against other people so you can make yourself feel better. Does that sound like the little political game we're into in the Presidential election? 'I am better than So-and-So because of this...'

Let's look at some other things concerning *judging God*, which are really, really profound. **How do people judge God?**

First of all, let's go back and see what God says about the Law, because when people *judge the Law*, what happens? I have a little booklet here we'll look into: *Why Christians Worship on Sunday*. I'll give you a little hint. What happens when you *judge* the Law of God? **You become a judge of God!** Deut. 6 tells us about the Law of God.

Psa. 119—if you want to know all about the laws of God, the commandments of God, the way they should be properly judged, the way they should be viewed from a converted point of view. It's sufficient that you read it, and marvel in what it says about:

- the commandments of God
- the laws of God
- the statutes of God
- the righteousness of God

and all of those things pertaining to God as the Lawgiver. Remember, there's *only one* Lawgiver Who has made **all law**, everywhere! Laws subsequent to that which man has made, which are not in agreement with the law, is **judging the Law of God**. We will see that they put themselves in the *seat of God* and issue pronouncements **as if they were God**. This is one of the greatest violations of religionists.

Deuteronomy 6:1: "Now these *are* the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God commanded to teach you so that you might do *them* in the land where you go to possess it, that you might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you, and your son, and your son's son, all the days of your life, and so that your days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and be diligent to *observe* it, so that it may be well with you, and that you may

greatly multiply, as the LORD God of our fathers has promised you, in the land that flows with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel. Our one God is *the* LORD, *the* LORD. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (vs 1-5).

There are people out there—so they can get around doctrine—say that we need love instead of doctrine. But pray tell, what are the commandments concerning love in the Bible other than doctrine? Think about it for a minute! A doctrine is a teaching. If there is something that is taught—and you must be taught to love—you do not automatically have love in your heart Mark 7:21 doesn’t confirm that. Jer. 17:9 does not confirm that; you must be taught to love. If you must be taught to love, it is a teaching, and a teaching is a doctrine.

What was one of the greatest doctrines of love that Jesus gave on the Passover night? This is a doctrine of Jesus, which then is *a teaching!* Let’s look at it. How did this doctrine come about? Is love rooted in commandments? *Yes!*

John 13:34: “A **new commandment I give to you:** that you love one another... [How?] ...**in the same way that I have loved you,** that is *how* you are to love one another.”

Is that a commandment? *Yes! He says it’s a ‘new commandment’!* Yet, people say we ought to have love; ‘we don’t need all this doctrine stuff, we need more love.’ How are you going to have love unless it is taught as a doctrine from the Word of God, since you do not possess it yourself? That’s another one of those little clever things that people get to, to try and bring in different doctrines. It’s under this basis of judging God!

Deuteronomy 6:5: “And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” That’s exactly what Jesus said all the Law and the Prophets were based upon.

How can you take any doctrine of the Bible, any teaching of Christ, which is not based on love? Let’s put it another way: If you want to only study about love, how then are you going to avoid the commandments of God? *You can’t! Impossible!*

Here’s the whole reason for it, v 6: “And these words which I command you this day shall be in your heart.” That’s where God wants them to be.

If you are *judging* the Law, you are *not a doer* of the Law. If you judge the Law then you

overthrow the greatest laws that have ever been given! *Those are the laws of God!* You overthrow them, and when you overthrow them, what do you bring in its place? *Your own law, which means then you are a lawgiver!*

Deuteronomy 4:1: “And now, O Israel, hearken to the statutes and to the judgments which I teach you, in order to do them, so that you may live...” That’s the whole purpose of what God wants.

I was listening to these tapes that Dr. Cameron put out—1983-4, somewhere around there—and it is amazing! Everything that he said is coming to pass. He was talking about how the research now is to try and show that homosexuality—he talks about homosexuality and AIDS—is trying to connect (and he predicted that it would) a so-called genetic difference between homosexuals and straights, as they would say it. But in rejecting the laws that God has, concerning that behavior, they become lawgivers and set their own rules. What happens? *They take a position that they are not capable of taking, that is sitting in the seat of God!* What happens? *The wages of sin is death!* It couldn’t be anymore clear than with AIDS.

God wanted them to “...live and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers gives to you. You shall not **add** to the word, which I command you...” (vs 1-2). In other words, you’re not to be a lawgiver.

“...neither shall you **take away** from it so that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baal Peor...” (vs 2-3). Of course, we have the doctrine on Baalim varied—Baal, lord.

“...For the LORD your God has destroyed from among you all the men that followed Baal Peor.” (v 3). We’re being assaulted with the doctrine of Baalim today. It’s everywhere: in our schools; in everything that is done—it is incredible! We have allowed people to become lawgivers and judge the Law of God and say the Law of God is not right in this society.

Verse 4: “And you who held fast to the LORD your God *are* alive, every one of you, this day. Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you should do so in the land where you go to possess it. And you shall keep and do *them*, for **this is your wisdom...**” (vs 4-6).

Yet, everyone wants to have more knowledge, more understanding, more



technology—which is then continuously eating from which tree? *The knowledge of the tree of good and evil!* The more knowledge they have, the more degenerate they become, rather than taking the laws and commandments of God as:

“...**your wisdom and your understanding** in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes and say, ‘Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people’” (v 6). Just the opposite of what they’re saying about us today.

- we’re stupid
- we’re lazy
- we’re ignorant
- we’re degenerate
- we’re indolent
- we’re hedonistic

Verse 7: “For what nation is so great whose God *is* so near to them, as the LORD our God *is*, whenever we call upon Him? And what great nation has statutes and judgments that *are* so righteous as **all this law which I set before you today?**” (vs 7-8).

I heard one politician say what we need to do is ‘wipe the deck clean’ and start with the Ten Commandments. This society and this country and this world has become so ‘talmudized’ by Pharisaical type laws—the same spirit of rejection of God that the Scribes and Pharisees had in their own laws—that we now have regulators and we have regulations that have the force of law. You can go to prison for killing a dog, but you can get off scot free for killing a person. You can go to prison because you don’t force your kids to go to these godless, atheistic schools, which they attend; you can go to jail! They shot a man down because he didn’t want his kids to go to school.

I don’t know when I will ever do it, but I still have it in my mind—and I will just have to say, brethren, that this whole thing of being Babylonianized for Babylon the Great is just another way of being ‘talmudized.’ Those people who claim that they’re in authority to do things, it’s incredible!

Rev. 3—I don’t think we’ve really understood this. I’ve given sermons on this, I’ve come close to it. It’s kind of like being on a trail of an elephant. You can follow the tracks, stumble over the manure, see the broken down trees that he’s taken to eat and all this sort of thing, but you don’t know what kind of beast you’re up against until you get up so you can see him. I don’t think we’ve understood what this is here:

Revelation 3:9: “Behold, I will make those

of the synagogue of Satan, who proclaim themselves to be Jews and are not, but do lie...” I don’t think we have understood *the power of the synagogue of Satan* in relationship to this world. We’ve said that it’s the Catholic Church—that’s one branch of it. We’ve said it’s Judaism—that’s one branch of it, a major branch. But it also encompasses banking, radio, television, the arts, law, everything in this world. It comes from the same fountain, and it comes from the same source, and that fountain that they are drinking at is Satan. They are not true Jews, as the Bible would describe them.

To give that series would require at least 10 sermons and it would be so overwhelmingly negative that just in trying to read the things that have been planned for over a hundred years, just to try and get it sorted out, is so depressing that I’ve had to put the book down several times. But there’s going to come a time when I’m going to have to, because everything now points to why the Church of God is being invaded by all of these Judaizing things toward Christianity. ***It’s coming from the synagogue of Satan!*** That’s why there is so much of a movement toward a 15<sup>th</sup> Passover. That’s why it’s absolutely essential that we understand it. Some people will say it makes no difference. You are *judging the Law* then! It does make a difference!

Does it make a difference between Sabbath and Sunday? *Yes, it does!* If you go to a 15<sup>th</sup> Passover are you not moving up one day? *Yes, you are!* That’s just as important as the difference between Sabbath and Sunday. That’s all a part of *judging the law!* It’s really amazing how these things are coming. There are more book written by Jews to destroy the New Testament.

There are more movements to try and get Churches of God didn’t want ‘sacred names’; to get them to go to a 15<sup>th</sup> Passover, Jewish prayer shawls; to do the things that are from Judaism; even calling Jesus a rabbi, a Pharisee, taught by them; and that we should follow the authority of the Pharisees as Jesus said in Matt. 23. It is incredible! It is overwhelming! I’m trying to write this book *The Christian Passover* and I can’t get it done fast enough. I have people calling me and asking for the information before I can even get it done, because they’re just being inundated by it.

I Had one man call me from North Carolina; someone sent the sermons on the Passover and he said, ‘Thank you’ for them.’ They were getting ready to keep a 15<sup>th</sup> Passover. That is all a part of ***judging God when you set yourself up to judge the Law.*** Whoever does that,

that person—you—establish your own version of that law, which then makes you a *lawgiver*.

Psa. 119 gives understanding on how we need to look at God's way and God's law and everything that God has and said and done and all that sort of thing. This is why when you come to the question of things to do and not to do in relationship to the Old Testament and New Testament, whose word do we go by? ***We go by Jesus' word, because He is the Lawgiver!***

Psalm 119:125: "I am Your servant; give me understanding that I may know Your testimonies. It is time for the LORD to work, for they have made void Your Law" (vs 125-126).

How did they make void the Law of God? *By making their own laws called 'traditions'!* This applies to Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism; more particularly those than any other religion. Why? *Because they claim to follow the Bible!* The Hindus don't claim to follow the Bible. The Buddhists don't claim to follow the Bible. They have their own, but they're not basing it on rejecting the laws of God, they're just out there basing it on their own. So, in their own way they're not quite as bad.

Don't anyone say that Fred Coulter endorsing Buddhism and Hinduism—I'm not by any stretch of the imagination—but I'm trying to relate to us that Judaism, Catholicism and Protestantism fall into an entirely different category than the Buddhist and Hindus, because these three have rejected in degree—whether a 100% down to 20%, however you want to look at it—the laws of God and judge their own laws better!

So, they "...have made void Your Law" (v 126). Well has Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, full well you reject the commandment of God that you may keep your own tradition.' (Mark 7) As I have written in the book *The Christian Passover*, the 15<sup>th</sup> Passover is a Judaism tradition and is not a command of God!

Here's David's attitude, v 127: **"Therefore, I love Your commandments above gold—yea, above fine gold."**

The other night as I was doing my notorious TV thing—flipping through the channels—I saw part of a movie where this fellow found—equivalent to a 15-lb. turkey in size—a solid gold nugget. Of course, everyone went loony-bin over it, needless to say. So, it gives us a great cause to think upon where he says, "Therefore, I love Your commandments above gold—yea, above fine gold." That is gold that has

been purified in the fire. How many people have been willing to make the judgment against God to accept money instead of the commandments of God? Let alone gold, but just money?

Notice the right attitude toward God's Law so you don't become a *judge of the law*, hence a *judge of God*, v 128: "Therefore, **I esteem** all Your precepts concerning all things to be right..." That says an awful lot; that is a broad, sweeping principle that is absolutely true!

"...and I hate every false way" (v 128). Let's think upon this just a minute here. *I consider*, "Therefore, I esteem... [by value, by estimation, by analysis, however you want to] ...all Your precepts concerning all things to be right..."

- On what one thing has God ever been wrong? *Nothing! No answer!*
- Why? *So that every mouth is going to be stopped!*
- Isn't that something? *Think about that!*

You talk about taking a principle and think and meditate on it all day and all night. Try thinking on that! If we can get away from our ATM/TV mentality to grasp the attention of our minds long enough to meditate at least sufficiently—say, 15 minutes in duration, if that's possible—to think about:

- that everything that God has ever said
- that God has ever done
- that God has ever proposed
- that God has ever thought of

is right altogether, *except when a person comes along and decides to change what God has given!* What is the greatest and foremost and most profound lie that Satan has contrived?

- that God's way is not right
- that God is wrong
- that God doesn't know what He's talking about

'Therefore, *we will* make our own laws.' In that then they become *judges of the Law* and hence, *judges of God!* What happens when that occurs? We see this happening time and time again:

- with greater intensity
- with more ferocity
- with more boldness
- with more absolute hedonistic rejection of God than ever before

*It is amazing!* This is the result of ***judging God and judging the Law***, which then becomes the most arrogant thing people can do. The doctrine of Sunday is one of the most arrogant things that men have ever devised as a guise to keep people

from keeping the Sabbath of God. Here's what happens; here's the ultimate of that:

Isaiah 5:20: "**Woe to those who call evil good and good evil...**" That's precisely what's happening in the world today; everything that is evil is called 'good.'

We can just look at the example of Magic Johnson. We can look at the example of this so-called innocent girl who was supposedly raped by Mike Tyson. If it was so bad, if it was so miserable, if it was so ugly, if she suffered as much as she did, why does she come out in public and smile? *To get the publicity and to get the money and all that sort of thing!* Now a whole bunch of Baptist ministers turn around and say, 'We ought to let Mike Tyson off because he is a very important black figure.

- Are they not re-legislating the laws of God?
- Are they not judging the laws of God?
- And the laws of the land, based upon the laws of God?
- *Yes, they are!*

Doing this, v 20: "...who put darkness for light and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! **Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes**, and prudent in their own sight!" (vs 20-21). Stop and think about it. Who is going to say that they're intelligent, when you compare what God has done?

I was waiting for my wife to bring the other car to me today after the one was broken down. I stood there alongside the road, and since we've had all this rain, guess what was growing up in the ditch alongside the highway? *Grass! Beautiful, lovely, green grass*, which to a cow is marvelous and sweet and great. I was sitting there rather disturbed because my car went down. I just had the new clutch put in and it blew up on the way out of town.

I looked at that grass and I thought, we're all so ignorant! We all know so little about so much that we think we're so smart and intelligent and wise and we stand alongside the road and we look at the grass and we don't even know what makes it grow. All we know is that the rain came and the sun came and there's the grass.

I thought to myself, how stupid and foolish are we as human beings. *Even the grass of the field, as Jesus said, 'testifies of the glory of God.'* We plant seeds in the ground and we get whatever we get from them, but we don't know how they grow, we don't know what triggers it, we don't know what mechanism is used. I heard this report on Rush Limbaugh, where they had a 'memorial mass' for 20,000 trees that were being cut down

to put in this dam because these radical eco-freaks say the trees are living things and they are memorializing the 'spirit of the trees.' ***They're judging God as unworthy!*** Exactly as it says here.

Verse 22: "Woe unto *them that are* mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink... [that may have a reference to drugs] ...Who justify the wicked for a bribe..." (vs 22-23). I wonder how much this board of Baptist ministers was going to get to justify Mike Tyson with the petitions; they had 10,000 signatures?

"...and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! Therefore, as the fire devours the stubble, and the flame burns up the chaff; their root shall be like rottenness, and their blossoms shall go up like dust because they have cast away the Law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel" (vs 23-24)—***because they judged the Law!***

Between preparing for James and this article that was sent to me—which we'll cover in just a minute—it is absolutely amazing the arrogance of human nature and the arrogance of the spirit of Satan the devil; he says. '**I** will be like the Most High; **I** will exalt myself above the stars of heaven; **I** will sit in the sides of the north' (Isa. 14). God says, 'You will be brought down to hell!'

Psalm 12:1: "Help, O LORD, for the godly man ceases; for the faithful disappear from among the children of men." Why? ***Because they are so brow-beaten, by so many people, claiming so many things that faith fails, and people give up on God!*** Or they run off in their stupidity, in their discouragement, in their arrogance. It's beyond belief; because they have ***judged the Law of God!***

Verse 2: "They speak falsehood each one with his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak." And oh, is that not so! Every message on every one of these stupid soap operas has a message to corrupt your mind, to corrupt your soul and to corrupt your morals. Now you know why I watch Discovery Channel more than anything else. All of these so-called prime-time sitcoms and soap operas are a bunch of trash designed to corrupt the minds of the viewers. You can name them all. I don't have time to name them. They're all a bunch of wretchedness, and sooner or later they all get around to some sort of perversion of sex and some absolutely denigration against God.

Verse 3: "The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, *and* the tongue that speaks proud things, who have said, 'With our tongue we shall

prevail; our lips are our own; who is lord over us?" (vs 3-4).

Yes, we have freedom of speech. Isn't that what it's saying here? We can say anything we want, we will do anything we want, because *we judge God unworthy; we judge the laws of God as unworthy!* We don't want them! We don't care for them! But when people put themselves in that position regardless of whether it may sound nice and right, they're setting themselves up for a judgment from God.

Verse 8: "The wicked walk on every side when vileness is exalted among the sons of men." In some ways I could say that's self-evident. But there are so many people that don't understand the most self-evident thing, it's incredible! Is that not what is happening with the whole political process of everyone who is involved in politics today?

You get one person out there who is trying to do it at least reasonably straight and he's inundated and put down in such an incredible way. You're not going to solve the problems of this world by politics, because there are too many people right here that fit this category in v 8. Just to give you a small example in our own little town here:

Rachelle was coming home from school and the neighbor has three dogs that they let out and they came at her in a very threatening way as if they were going to bite her. She succeeded and nothing happened, she got home and everything was fine. So, Delores called the SPCA and told them that she would appreciate it if you would give a call to this lady and remind her to take care of her animals. They wanted Delores to testify and take that woman to court. *Incredible!*

Yet, in the same community they just dug up some bones at the end of the street where it was a transplant of a skeleton from someone who had died three or four years ago in Hollister and no one ever knew. But you get a bureaucrat out there that is going to exercise his power and 'I want to get this person in before the judge over these dogs.' It's insane! That's what happens.

Verse 8: "The wicked walk on every side when vileness is exalted among the sons of men." Sounds like Washington, D.C.!

Here's the whole crux of it. Here is the greatest judgment that can be made by human beings, and most of them make it in one way or another.

Psalms 14:1: "**The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God!'**...." That means down deep inside a person is convicted that there is no

God, and *they're a total fool!* That's what the Bible says.

"...They are corrupt; they have done abominable works, there is none who does good" (v 1). *Not one!* Why? ***Because they judge the Law of God,*** and they become lawgivers and lawmakers by the very act of rejecting God. They now, in rejecting God, what do they always do? *They have their own standard! Yes, they do!*

Verse 2: "The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any who understand, who seek *after* God. They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not *even* one.... [quoted in Rom. 3, New Testament doctrine] ...Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, those who devour My people as men eat bread and do not call upon the LORD. There they are in great fear, for God is with the generation of the righteous" (vs 2-5). Then it talks about living in this society.

(go to the next track)

Verse 7: "Oh, that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When the LORD turns away the captivity of His people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad."

Here's an article that was sent to me by a man in Canada. This becomes really profound:

The Folly of Denying God by Hank Hanegraaff ([equip.org/article/the-folly-of-denying-god/](http://equip.org/article/the-folly-of-denying-god/))

Beyond a doubt, the most significant question to ever penetrate the human mind is that of the existence of God. More consequences for humanity hinge on the denial or affirmation of God's existence than any other issue.

Countless numbers of Christian families have sent their children off to schools across America only to see them return as strangers robbed of their faith in God and of the basis for morality and ethics.

*Absolutely true!*

Many of these children have attempted to fill the vacuum in their lives through aberrant sex, drugs, and alcohol. Others have sought to fill this void with material success, which can never satisfy the spiritual needs of one created in the image of God.

"Is there really a God?" Though there are a variety of possible responses to this question, there are three traditional responses that predominate in Western

society:

1) God does not exist—*atheism*; (2) we cannot know whether God exists—*agnosticism*; and (3) a personal God does exist—*theism*.

In each one of these cases you are making a judgment about God, and you're making a judgment about yourself as a person.

This article will demonstrate how, in witnessing to an atheist, one can move from atheism to agnosticism, from agnosticism to theism, and from the concept of an impersonal God to the personal God of Scripture.

To begin, atheism involves a logical fallacy known as a *universal negative*. Simply stated, a person would have to be omniscient and omnipresent to be able to say "there is no God"....

The Bible says that one is a 'fool.' What position does this put you in? *You have prove there is no God!* The reverse of that is that you can prove there is a God! What position does this put the individual in that makes that statement: 'I do not believe in God'? *They are an atheist!* But what position does it put them in? *A judge! More so than a judge! It puts them in the position of God!* I never really understood that until studying for this on James and this article was sent to me. In order to make the statement 'there is no God,' what must you know? This is profound!

To begin, atheism involves a logical fallacy known as a *universal negative*. Simply stated, a person would have to be omniscient and omnipresent to be able to say "there is no God" from his own pool of knowledge....

In other words, to say 'there is no God' *you must know everything there is in the universe so you can make that as a definitive statement*. So therefore, anyone who says there is no God cannot know everything there is in the universe.

...Only someone capable of being in all places at the same time—with a perfect knowledge of all that is in the universe—can make such a statement *based on the facts*.

I think that is really something when you come down to the most profound thing in judging and in judging God, and in judging God's laws. That's what the Bible says: 'He who says there is no God is a fool.' In other words, *a person would have to be God to say there is no God!* Hence the insertion is logically indefensible.

By using arguments like this, you will

often find that an atheist quickly converts to agnosticism and is thus making progress rapidly in the right direction.

This leads us to the second possible response: *agnosticism*. In dealing with an open-minded agnostic, an approach I have found effective is to point out that the universe is an *effect*, which requires a sufficient *cause*...

Just like standing there looking at that grass. 'Fred, you're a dodo.' That's just how I felt. There I am, my great-exalted Isuzu broken down, brand new clutch, blown out on my way to Church. I'm standing there waiting for the tow truck to come and take it away, and I'm standing out there in the sun, seeing all that God has made. I looked down there at the grass: **What do you really know?** Ever do that, talk to yourself that way sometimes. What do you really know? You can't even tell how grass grows. Yet, the Bible says that we're all 'as grass.' We all come from grass—you do! Everything you eat comes out of the ground. The meat you eat comes from those that eat the grass, which comes from out of the ground. It's amazing!

So the result of the universe is an affect that requires a sufficient cause, and the only cause is God. As the Scripture says, 'The heavens declare the glory of God and the skies proclaim the work of His hands.'

It is helpful to clarify that there are only four possible explanations for how the universe came to be....

Then it goes through that. I won't go on with the rest of the article, but I thought that was a tremendous article.

Psalm 36:1 ties in with the same thing; this is exactly the way that the world is; it is amazing! "The wicked utters transgression in his heart. There is no fear of God before his eyes, for he flatters himself in his own eyes... [I am the greatest!] ...until his iniquity is found to be hateful. The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit; he has stopped acting wise and doing good. He plots iniquity upon his bed; he sets himself in a way that is not good; he does not hate evil" (vs 1-4). Why? *Because he's sitting in the seat of God saying there is no God!*

Or if he acknowledges that there is a God, he says, 'God, I acknowledge that You exist, but I've got to tell you something, I don't like this law concerning idols. We're going to make them and we're going to put thing in our church, but we're going to so deceive the people, and we're going to tell them that they're really not worshipping idols.'

Let me read to you a couple of things out of this book concerning *Why Christians Worship on Sunday*. They are therefore, making a judgment concerning the Sabbath Day. What does this title also tell us? *Why they don't worship on the Sabbath!* Which then tells us: What do they know? *They know that the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week?* How would they know to come to Church on Sunday if they didn't know which is the first day of the week if they didn't know which day was the seventh day of the week—seeing as how there are only seven days in a week. They start out they even quote the Sabbath commandment. You talk about judging God.

### ***Why Christians Worship on Sunday:***

A popular false view! Since the Sabbath commandment in Exo. 20 is one of the Ten Commandments and because the other nine are all repeated in the New Testament, the Sabbath-keepers declare that the observance of the Sabbath is part of God's basic moral law.

Now, we're going to say, 'Yeah but, God, we don't agree with that.' They even quote it! Then it gives the Exodus account. I won't go through and read too much on it.

### **The Basis for Sunday-worship:**

We've got to find a basis for Sunday-worship!

First of all, we worship on Sunday because the Lord rose from the dead on this day.

First error: He didn't rise on that day; He was already risen. They came to the tomb and they said, 'He is not here.'

Mark, Luke and John all assert that when the women went to the tomb they found it empty on the first day of the week. Down through the ages...

Notice this great creative leap:

...of church history, believers have been almost unanimous in looking upon Sunday as the time of our Lord's resurrection. Therefore, the Lord's Day.

Of course, they go through and they give all the things concerning that, which is a bunch of trash!

**The Law Today:** In light of all this, I well understand someone saying, 'Isn't it a dangerous teaching? Will it not cause some to become lawless in their conduct? Do not the Ten Commandments contain the basic laws of God?'

Now, you talk about arrogance in judging the Law

of God, this is profoundly incredible in my mind.

Yes, they do. In fact, nine of the Ten Commandments are restated in the New Testament in various forms. We can see then that certain principles abide and that many of the laws given to Israel by God include eternal moral standards and these have never changed. Now, if they are all moral standards, which have never changed, how then can you come to the next to the longest commandment...

By the way, it is not the longest, the one concerning idols is the longest commandment!

...in the New Testament and say that it is not morally profound and has inherent, eternal spiritual value.

Here's how they do it:

At least two fundamental, underlying and continuing principles can be found in this law. First, every man who has the means of production should have consideration for those less fortunate than he.

What does that mean? That's kind of a nebulous thing.

Secondly, this law demonstrates that if the needy are able-bodied it is better for them to work for their food than...

How did he get from that to that? Oh, ghastly! Then he goes through and he gives all of the first day of the week quotes in the New Testament and tries to justify it. Meanwhile, I want to come to the conclusion of it, because I don't want to get bogged down into all of the technical arguments one way or the other. I want to come to the conclusion of it. Listen to this statement; here's the final conclusion after going through all of this:

In our society, Sunday is the most suitable for corporate Christian worship and fellowship. *Most suitable!* Did they not judge the Law of God as being not right, and now 'we set our own law'? *Yes!*

The believer who is not required to work on Sunday should be grateful of the special blessing afforded to him on the Lord's Day.

But, it's all right if you have to work on that day, just come to church early. Or, if you want to play golf, come to the drive-in. There's a drive-in church in Southern California, you don't even have to get out of your car!

He will gladly set aside that day from

the routine of his daily pursuits to meet and fellowship with other Christians and to worship the risen Savior. His attendance at church and performance of spiritual service should never be done grudgingly. It's a glorious privilege when **we** make...

Notice the words here, because now they have sat in the *judgment of God!*

...the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, a time of rest from temporal cares and give **ourselves** to greater spiritual activity, **we** receive a wonderful blessing, a wonderful reward. **We** will grow in grace and rejoice in the fellowship with God's people. **We** will keep **ourselves** in tune with the Lord and His Word and delight in the victory **we** see in the lives of others. And **we** will mature in service to the Lord...

I couldn't believe it when I read this! Right when I was studying about *judging the Law!*

...and the blessing of His love. The Lord's Day has a special significance for the sincere believer, for on Sunday we celebrate the resurrection of Christ and rejoice in our new life in Him. We are reminded that we have been born anew by faith and thank God for the miraculous redemption performed in us. May the Lord's Day always be, for all of us, a day of overflowing praise and service and truly the day of all the week which is the best.

In conclusion, Christians worship on Sunday because they love the Lord, and deeply desire to honor Him, study His Word and fellowship with His people.

That's the opposite of what the Bible says. Let's go to 1-John for just a minute {note sermon series: *Epistles of John*—absolutely marvelous, brethren, perhaps one of the best series we have ever undertaken.}

1-John 4:19: "We love Him because He loved us first." The Catholics who have forced upon the Protestants—and the Protestants have willingly followed along—have accepted Sunday as the day of worship because they *judged and deemed* the Sabbath unworthy of them. So, now '**we** are greater than that and **we** come to God and **we** tell God which day **we** will worship on. And **we** in loving God will force Him to love us.' But that's just the opposite of what this says. "We love Him because He loved us first."

1-John 5:2: "By this *standard* we know

that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep His commandments." *Except for the Sabbath!* And the Catholics say then, 'except for the second commandment.' Then we have to say, 'Well, except for the fifth commandment, and except for the sixth commandment.' Then you have to have an exception for all of them!

That's why David said, 'I esteem all Your laws to be right and good, and every precept about everything that You have, O Lord, is right!' What happens when we sin? *We make a mini-judgment when we sin and go along with it!* 'Oh well, whatever the cause may be.' So, *we make a judgment against God*—don't we? *Yes!* That's why we need to repent and grow in grace and knowledge and understanding.

Let's see another example here in the Old Testament, and this is absolutely profound. Here is a command that has nothing to do with the commandments of God as being the Ten Commandments. Let's see what happened.

1-Samuel 15:1: "Samuel said to Saul, 'The LORD sent me to anoint you to be king over His people, over Israel...."

Verse 3: "Now go and strike Amalek, and completely destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and donkey." The account says that he didn't do that.

Then came in, v 8: "And he [Saul] took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive. And he completely destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag and..." (vs 8-9).

*They judged God! They judged the commandments of God!* This is anything that God says, if it's right and good and true... *Not IF!* Anything that God say IS right and good and true and just, whether it is painful or not!

So they says, 'Man, look at: "...the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fatlings and the lambs, and all *that was* good, and would not completely destroy them..." (v 9). Surely God would not want us to destroy all of this—would He? That's exactly what happened!

Verse 10: "And the Word of the LORD came to Samuel saying, 'It repents Me that I have set up Saul *to be* king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not performed My commandments....'" (vs 10-11).

Did God have a judgment against Saul, because of not following that? *Yes, He did!* He lost his kingship. And what did aged Samuel have to do? *He had to go hack up Agag with the sword!*

Samuel went down to see Saul and Saul got up and said, v 13: "...‘You *are* blessed of the LORD. I have performed the commandment of the LORD.’.... [Sounds like some Sunday-keepers!] ...And Samuel said, ‘What then *is* this bleating of the flock in my ears? And *what is* the sound of the herd which I hear?’ And Saul said, ‘**They**... [always an excuse] ...have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to **sacrifice to the LORD** your God....’ (vs 13-15). And that makes it right! Anything you do in the name of God is right. As long as you do it in the name of God, it’s right. **NONSENSE!**

"...And the rest we have completely destroyed.’ And Samuel said to Saul, ‘Stay and I will tell you what the LORD has said to me tonight.’ And he said to him, ‘Speak on.’ And Samuel said, ‘When you *were* little in your own sight... [when you had a right attitude and were humble] ...did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? And the LORD anointed you king over Israel. And the LORD sent you on the way and said, “Go and completely destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until you destroy them.” Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you fly upon the spoil and do evil in the sight of the LORD?’” (vs 15-19).

Notice how these people think once they’ve made a *judgment against God* and establish that what they have done in *judging God* that theirs is better than God’s. What do they say? *Same thing as Sunday-keepers!* Same thing as anyone who does that!

Verse 20: “And Saul said to Samuel ‘Yes, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD... [I’m doing the will of God] ...and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have completely destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took from the spoil, of *the* flocks and herd, *the* best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal.’ And Samuel said, ‘Does the LORD *have as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices **as in obeying the voice of the LORD?**....’” (vs 20-22).

- Did not God speak all those words in the Ten Commandments? *Yes, He did!*
- Did not God speak all the words that are written in the Law? *Yes, He did!*
- Did not Jesus speak the words in the New Testament?
- Did not Jesus inspire the words in the New Testament?

- *Yes, He did!*

“...Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice!**” (v 22). Isa. 1 talks about all ‘your sacrifices, your new moons, your sabbaths, I can’t stand them, get them away from Me, they are a bother to Me, they are a burden to Me, they are a worry to Me,’ God says.

“...Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice!** To hearken *is* better than the fat of rams, for rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the Word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king!” (vs 22-23).

***Judging the Word of God unworthy!***  
When you do that you become a lawgiver. Did Saul not have his own version of the law? *Yes, he did!* Did he not say then that ‘we have obeyed’ the voice of the Lord? *Yes, he did*—but they didn’t!

Even though he said, 24: “And Saul said to Samuel, ‘I have sinned....’” and didn’t repent and do.

Verse 26: “And Samuel said to Saul, ‘I will not return with you, for you have rejected the Word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.’ And as Samuel turned around to go...” (vs 26-27).

And Saul said, ‘Oh please come with me before the people so the people won’t see that I’ve been rejected of God.’ And Samuel said, ‘All right, I’ll do it, but you bring Agag here and I’ll hack him to pieces.

Let’s see another case of someone who had *their own judgment*, going to do it their own way *against God*.

2-Samuel 15:1 “Now it came to pass after this, Absalom...” Absalom was quite a person. He had hair that it is reported was clear down to his ankles. You talk about long-haired freaks! One of the sons of David, by the way.

“...prepared himself chariots and horses and fifty men to run before him” (v 1). He wasn’t self-centered—was he? As you go down the road and you have 50 men running before you, ‘Hail! Hail! Here comes Absalom!’ Had their own Hollywood routine—didn’t they?

Verse 2: “And Absalom rose up early and stood beside the way of the gate. Now it was *so*, if any man had a suit... [controversy] ...to come before the king for judgment, then Absalom called to him and said, ‘What city *are* you from?’ And he said, ‘Your servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.’ And Absalom said to him, ‘See! Your matters *are* good and right, but no one from the



king *will hear you*” (vs 2-3). In other words, ‘You’re not going to get in to see the king. I’ll take care of you.’

Verse 4: “And Absalom said, ‘**Oh, that I might be made judge in the land...**’” Sounds exactly like the presidential campaign. ‘Oh, if I were made President!’

“...so that every man who has any suit or cause might come to me, and **I** would do him justice!’ And it was *so*, when any man came near to bow down to him, he put forth his hand and took him and kissed him. And in this way Absalom did to all Israel that came to the king for judgment. And Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel” (vs 4-6). The rest of it is that he set up his own rebellion.

Let’s see what Job did, how Job was judging God, and that was the biggest sin that he had—he was *judging God*! Here’s what Job said:

Job 9:32: “For *He* [God] *is* not a man, as *I am*, that I should answer Him, *that* we should come together in court... [judgment] ...there is no umpire between us, *who* might lay his hand upon us both” (vs 32-33). He’s judging God, putting God in that human realm as it were. There are many places in Job that you could go and read.

Job 34:35—God says: “Job has spoken without knowledge...” That’s exactly what happens when people make these judgments.

“...and his words *were* without wisdom. My desire *is* that Job may be tried unto the end because *his* answers *are* like those of wicked men. For he adds rebellion to his sin; he claps *his* hands among us, and multiplies his words against God” (vs 35-37). That means he judged God!

Whatever God does is good and right— isn’t it? Whether for good or evil, it is right! You read Rev. 16 and all the judgments of the final seven last plagues—those are awesome! I mean, when you really think about those things happening, it just takes the breath out of you. And the angel says, ‘*Holy and righteous and true are Your judgments, O Lord.*’

Job 35:1: “And Elihu answered and said, ‘Do you think this to *be* right, you *that* say, “My righteousness *is* more than God’s”?’” (vs 1-2).

- Isn’t that what people proclaim when they *judge the Law*?
- When they *judge God*?
- When they have the audacity to run up and:
  - ✓ *tell God* what they will do?
  - ✓ *tell God* what they won’t do?

✓ *tell God* what to do?

That’s what they’re doing when they say: “...“My righteousness *is* more than God’s”? For you say, “What advantage will it be to You? What profit shall I have, more than *if* I had sinned?” I will answer your words, and your companions with you. Look to the heavens, and see...” (vs 2-5).

In other words, the same argument that we are told to tell the atheists: ‘you are not omniscient; you are not omnipotent; you’re not omnipresent; you are not everywhere; you are not God; you have no reason or business to *judge God* or to *judge His Law*! You’re not God! **Only God can do that!**

There are two men going around the country—Ray Lampley and John Trescott—cavorting around as the two witnesses and writing and calling brethren *and telling God when He may return!* And *telling God what He may do!* They’re on a tour of warning officials in the land. Who sent them to warn? Besides, the two witness, I feel, are exactly who they’re going to be: the high priest at the temple to be built and the governor of Judea. It’s not going to be some upstart Oklahomans and run around and tell God what to do.

Letter from Lampley: Many are claiming that the Great Tribulation is not here yet, we have hundreds of proofs that it is here and has been since March 26, 1991. We are in those 1,290 days of Dan. 12:11 and the 1,260 days of Rev. 12:6. Our prophecy as a whole has been right on target. Only the ignorance of the American people has prevented them from seeing and knowing we are in the last days with only 981 days left before Jesus sets His feet on the Mt. of Olives.

Jesus said that ‘no man knows the day or the hour.’ Not even the Son of man. Why? *Because the events have to be fulfilled before it’s going to be put into action!* I’m sure because of stupidity and people like this that God is going to have it at a time when they don’t know.

I’d like to have an opportunity to speak to your people in your area.... And to give them the warning... John Trescott and I will be in the Los Angeles area around 5 p.m., March 16<sup>th</sup>, leaving at 8 a.m. March 19<sup>th</sup> for Bakersfield. We will have most of our necessities, but it would be nice if we could have a place to sleep overnight and have a hot shower.

If you're the two witnesses, how are you going to be dressed? You talk about the height of arrogance! You talk about the height of *judging God* and telling God *what He will do* and *what He won't do* and *why He will do it*—this is it!

We've had run-ins with this man before. I will label them as *unequivocally false prophets!* They are not the two witnesses. There was already one guy who was the two prophets—Martin Philapello<sup>[unsure of spelling]</sup>. He preached for years that he was one of the two witnesses and that God was going to raise up Herbert W. Armstrong. I forget what year it was going to happen. *No, it didn't happen that year*, and he said it was going to happen the next year. *No, it didn't happen then*. He said it was going to happen on Passover. *No, it didn't happen*. It's going to happen on Pentecost. *It didn't happen*. It's going to happen on Trumpets. *It didn't happen*. So, he finally came to the conclusion that *he* was the two witnesses.

Here is what the two witnesses are going to be and how they're going to act. Where are they going to prophecy? *In Jerusalem!* Not coming to California! Not sending some stupid insane letter to the heads of government! It doesn't say that the two witnesses 'wrote scorching letters to the leaders of the world and they repented.' *Nonsense!*

Revelation 11:3: "And I will give *power* to My two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and *the* two lampstands that stand before the God of the earth. And if anyone attempts to harm them, fire will go out of their mouths and devour their enemies...." (vs 3-5).

If we only have 981 days left where's the fire that's proceeded out of your mouth? *Didn't happen!* You need to beg for food.

"...For if anyone attempts to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.... [How many have you killed with the fire out of your mouth?] ...These have authority to shut heaven so that no rain may fall in *the* days of their prophecy..." (vs 5-6).

Come and stand out here and stop the clouds. Come out here and stop the sun if you be the two witnesses and the arrogance of what you're doing in bother brethren and send letters like this.

"...and they have authority over the waters, to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they will" (v 6).

I forgot, v 3, this is the main part: ***they are clothed in sackcloth!*** They're not running around begging brethren for a shower. They're clothed in sackcloth!

Verse 7: "And when they have completed their testimony, the beast who ascends out of the abyss will make war against them, and will overcome them, and will kill them. And their bodies *will lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified" (vs 7-8). *Jerusalem!*

The two witnesses are not going to be traveling around in broken down cars, mooching off of brethren, and sending letters to various governors of the states and the President and so forth. When the two witnesses come on the scene, ***we will know that they are the ones***, because of what they do. They're not going to go up and play hand-holding patty-cake with the governor of California or any other governor. They're going to stand in the *face of the beast* and the *false prophet* and say, 'Thus says the Lord!'

I'll tell you one thing: If there's anything I don't want to be—which I know I won't be—is one of the two witnesses. And the last thing that anyone ought to do is have the *arrogance and the judgment against God* to set themselves up as the two witnesses. You think about that! Has not one big Church of God already been disintegrated for the arrogance of trying that? *Yes!* Claiming that it was Elijah, the two witnesses, it was fulfilling the commission of Ezekiel and Jeremiah and Isaiah all rolled into two people. One died and the other's trying to exalt himself again! Then we have this! I tell you, it's something! Anyway, that's what it means to be a *judge against God!*

James 4:11: "Brethren, do not talk against one another...." I'm not talking against these men, their own testimony and their own words are talking against them. I'm just telling them what the Bible says. I hope they repent. I hope the brethren they visit will get them in a corner and say, 'Look, what are you doing with this kind of attitude?'

"...The one who talks against a brother, and judges his brother, is speaking against *the* law, and is judging the law. But if you judge *the* law, you are not a doer of *the* law; rather, *you are* a judge. *But* there is *only* one Lawgiver... [God! ***If you're judging the Law, you're judging God!***] ...Who has power to save and to destroy. Who are you that you presume to judge another?" (vs 11-12).

The whole lesson in here is so profound! Just take this lesson and think about it when you

see some of these religionists or you watch them on television, when you read some of the things they say or look at some of their doctrines, and you will see it is absolutely amazing what they claim.

So, brethren, *let's not judge one another and let's not judge God!*

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order—A Faithful Version*

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) James 4:11-12
- 2) Deuteronomy 6:1-5
- 3) John 13:24
- 4) Deuteronomy 6:5-6
- 5) Deuteronomy 4:1-8
- 6) Revelation 3:9
- 7) Psalm 119:125-128
- 8) Isaiah 5:20-24
- 9) Psalm 12:1-4, 8
- 10) Psalm 14:1-5, 7
- 11) Psalm 36:1-4
- 12) 1 John 4:19
- 13) 1 John 5:2
- 14) 1 Samuel 15:1, 3, 8-11, 13-24, 26-27
- 15) 2 Samuel 15:1-6
- 16) Job 9:32-33
- 17) Job 34:35-37
- 18) Job 35:1-5
- 19) Revelation 11:3-6, 3, 7-8
- 20) James 4:11-12

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Mark 7:21
- Jeremiah 17:9
- Matthew 23
- Isaiah 14; 1
- Romans 3
- Revelation 16

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##### Books:

- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Why Christians Worship on Sunday* (no author found or cited)

Article: *The Folly of Denying God* by Hank Hanegraaff ([equip.org/article/the-folly-of-denying-god/](http://equip.org/article/the-folly-of-denying-god/))

Sermon Series: *The Epistles of John*

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## Epistle of James XII Stir Up Treasure in Heaven

Fred R. Coulter

I might mention something very interesting that Carl Franklin came up with in his studies in the book of Hebrews. It was probably at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles from the time of the confrontation of the prophets of Baal and Elijah when it ended the drought. They had the ceremony—at the Feast of Tabernacles—of pouring the water around the altar. That makes the pouring the water on the altar and the offering of Elijah even much more impressive. That was at the time of the evening sacrifice, which then shows that the water would be poured on after sunset, so it was really the last day of the Feast.

That means that the drought started on Passover. And because of the Baal worship and the sins of the children of Israel, God began the punishment on the Passover. In studying through that, and in going through the series in James, and then going into the book of Hebrews you think: How are these connected? Well, their connected this way: It's very likely that the problems that were happening in relationship to the book of Hebrews had to do with the Passover; had to do with the 14<sup>th</sup> vs the 15<sup>th</sup> Passover, and having to do with the Jews going back to taking animal sacrifices and rejecting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Jesus did not bring the Kingdom when they wanted Him to bring the Kingdom. So, there are some very enlightening things there in the book of Hebrews.

How does this come in with the book of James? Let me show you. We find something that is very interesting and only happens in three books of the New Testament, and that is when you come to the book of James, the very last verse:

James 5:20 (KJV): "Let him know that he who converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sin." We all know that there's no 'Amen' there. Yet, every other book in the New Testament ends with an 'Amen' except James, Acts and 3<sup>rd</sup> John.

Comparing what is in the book of Hebrews and the problems in the book of James, and you go back and you understand what James said to Paul, 'Paul, go make these offerings over here at the temple. You see how many thousands were following Christ are still zealous for the Law. So that they will know that you are not saying that the Law itself is sin.'

That's basically the sum of what was being said. However, when you already have the sacrifice

of Christ, and you go back to offering animal sacrifices to replace that sacrifice of Christ, then that can become sin. You're no longer looking to Christ Who's the greater sacrifice, you're looking to the animal sacrifice to do for you what only the sacrifice of Christ can do. Based on that:

1. Could it be that the Epistle of James was sent along with the Epistle to the Hebrews?
2. Why was not the author noted in the book of Hebrews?

They say they don't know who wrote it. However, it is in the style of Luke. Who did a lot of the scribing for Paul? *Luke!* Could the Apostle Paul—who was nearly killed in Jerusalem when they found out that he was there to make these offerings and the Roman guard had to come and save him and protect him from death—ever written a letter to the Jews in Jerusalem and have them even read it if they knew it came from him? *NO! Never, never happen!*

Paul is down in Italy<sup>[corrected]</sup> where he's under house arrest protected from the Jews; James is still up in Jerusalem and says, 'Oh, we've got to solve this problem.' I'm sure there's communication between James and Paul, and with Luke right there with him. 'Here's how we'll do it. I will send a letter and then you write one, Paul, but have Luke write and don't put your name on it, and we can send it out to everyone.' We need someone with your technical knowledge of the Old Covenant and the sacrifices to be able to write to the Jews so we can pull them back from rejecting the sacrifice of Christ and going to the animal sacrifices again. It's possible, I don't know, but I just interject that as something to think about.

Hebrews 13:24: "Greet all your leaders, and all the saints. Those from Italy send greetings to you. May God's grace *be* with all of you. Amen" (vs 24-25).

Some Bibles say: 'Written to the Hebrews from Italy, by Timothy.' I don't think they would accept anything from Timothy, and Timothy was half-Greek/half-Jew anyway. Remember the problem they had with circumcision with Timothy. I would have to say it was written at the time of Paul's first imprisonment when Luke and Timothy were with him, and if the book of James was a cover-letter for Hebrews, this might help explain the whole flow of things and why there is so much stress upon the Passover and Atonement and the sacrifice of Christ, and so forth.

James 4:13: “Now listen, those of you who say, ‘Today and tomorrow we will go into such a city, and we will spend a year, and we will conduct business and make a profit.’ You do not even know what *will happen* tomorrow! For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little while, and then disappears. Instead, you *ought to* say, ‘If the Lord wills we will live, and we will do this or that.’ But now you boast in your own arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, *if* anyone knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin” (vs 13-17).

James 5:1: “Come now, *you* rich men, weep! Howl over the miseries that *are* coming upon *you*! Your riches have rotted, and your garments have become moth-eaten. Your gold and *your* silver have been eaten away, and their corrosion will be a testimony against you, and will consume your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth for *the* last days. Listen! The wages of the workmen who harvested your fields, which have been withheld by you, are crying out; and the cries of those who reaped have entered into the ears of *the* Lord of hosts” (vs 1-4).

The ‘Lord of hosts’ refers to in the Old Testament the Lord of ‘sabaoth’—host or leader of the armies. It’s interesting he’s saying ‘entered into the ears of the Lord of hosts.’ In other words the armies of God are going to come against you.

Verse 5: “You have lived in luxury upon the earth, and *you* have lived in self-gratification; you have nourished your hearts as in *the* day of slaughter. You have condemned *and* you have killed the righteous, *and* he does not resist you” (vs 5-6).

Now, one thing as we look at this section we just read. He does not address them as ‘brethren.’ Notice v 7: “Therefore, brethren...” Changes the whole subject.

Let’s go back and look at these and why would the Apostle James have anything to do with business or merchandising in the book of James. You read that and you think: Why is he saying this?

Let’s understand about merchandising. Who were some of the earliest and most successful and traveling businessmen even here in America? *The Jews!* In their little covered wagons going out and selling pots and pans and this and that and the other thing. It’s the same thing. They would load up their caravans and go into the city and they would buy and sell and make money. It was a very common thing for them to do.

James 4:13: “Now listen, those of you who say, ‘Today and tomorrow we will go into such a city, and we will spend a year, and **we will conduct business and make a profit.**’” What he’s talking about here is not being against profit. It’s not saying that now we’re all going to be communists.

What kind of profit do you suppose that he would be talking about here? Not necessarily spiritual profit, but ultimately you want to have spiritual profit, that’s right, that’s true. What kind of profit were they looking to do? *They were looking to have physical profit!* That’s the ultimate conclusion, spiritual profit; but he’s talking about the wrong kind of profit. And what have so many of the Jewish businessmen been accused of? *The wrong kind of profit!* He dealing with a Jewish problem. ‘We’re going to go out and we’re going to skin these Gentiles.’ That’s what it is!

The main, important problem that he’s talking about is *not including God in the planning of your physical life!* I look at that and I say, ‘O boy, there’s a dagger in my heart.’ How many times have I done things that have gone wrong where I didn’t pray about it when I should have and say, ‘O God, bless me in this effort and help me to see what I’m doing, whether it’s right or wrong.’ Instead of getting strung out here and then find out when you’re down the road, Ut oh, I didn’t include God in this and now it’s not going right.’ That’s what he’s saying here. You don’t know what tomorrow is going to be.

Let’s look at a couple of things concerning planning with and without God. Let’s look at the *wrong kind* of merchandising. This is the kind of merchandising that Satan has inspired and does. We’re seeing it happen right here today—that same kind of spirit. What kind of merchandising does Satan like to do? What can we think of today, where there is merchandising of products that are done in such a way that take advantage of the worker? Not necessarily unions. There are bad unions; there are some unions that are needful, worse than that.

How many remember what happened in Guam. In Guam there are Chinese nationals from the mainland where the companies have come to Guam and they bought property and they have their factories there for whatever they do—making clothes or parts or whatever. What is Guam? *A U.S. possession!* What can you claim if you make something in Guam? *Made in the good ole USA!* Tax free duty! They brought in workers from the mainland of China and what did they do? They had them in this exclusive area to work, which was a slave camp! They paid them like \$20 a month! In addition to having slave labor in the prisons in China.

Then they turned around and say, ‘We’re going to sell this at a good, cheap price. That’s the kind of manufacturing and merchandising that is based upon sin. A fair wage for fair labor, for good work, for a fair profit is right. We will see that God even encourages us to do that. But, here is Satan’s

activity, we won't go through the whole account of Lucifer and being kicked out.

Ezekiel 28:17: "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty..." We are talking about lifted up hearts here in business. 'We're going to this, we're going to do that, we're going to do the other thing.' If you trust in your own beauty, you're what? *Vain!* You're trusting in what? *Yourself!* That's exactly what he's talking about here with this kind of merchandising, *you're trusting in yourself.*

So the final analysis is even in what we consider the mundane part of our life, we need God's blessing in it.

"...you have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness. I will cast you to the ground; I will lay you before kings, that they may behold you. By the multitude of your iniquities, by the unrighteousness of your trade... [merchandising] ...you have profaned your sanctuaries; therefore I brought forth a fire from your midst; it shall devour you, and I will bring you to ashes upon the earth, before the eyes of all who see you" (vs 17-18).

Let's go and see the fulfillment of the crashing of the wrong merchandising system in the world. It's called Babylon the Great. What was Babylon noted for? What was Sodom noted for? *Wealth, beauty, goods and services, art and craft, and all of this!* Is this not the epitome of the businessmen in the world, making their profit and extorting it upon our back and our lives and our being? *Yes!* Or they sell you something that doesn't work, or is inferior? *Here it is, Rev. 18!* It's talking about Babylon the Great and all the things that are going on there.

Revelation 18:7: "To the degree that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, give to her as much torment and sorrow. For she says in her heart, 'I sit a queen enthroned, and am not a widow; and in no way shall I experience sorrow.' For this very reason, her plagues shall come in one day..." (vs 7-8). Isn't that what James says? You don't know what tomorrow's going to bring; you don't know.

"...death and sorrow and famine; and she shall be burned with fire; for the Lord God, Who executes judgment upon her, *is* powerful"

That ties right in with Ezek. 28. You can read some of the other accounts there about the trading and the merchandising and the ships of Tarsus and the gold of Ophir. All of those things all tie in with it. What are they doing right now? General Motors, oh poor Gen. Motors, they've got to close down. No, they deliberately planned it. They deliberately did not improve their product. They deliberately did not improve their plants. They deliberately took advantage of the workers. Now

they are just forced to go to Mexico where they have near slave labor. They can pay them \$2/hour, where in America— with all the benefits—it cost them \$50/hour. Same thing!

Now, all of these families dependent upon this are now put out of work. Why? Because of greed, because of sin; all of these planned things to take advantage of people so they can make a profit. Listen, Gen. Motors can afford to lose \$4-billion in a year. They just let it accumulate so they would have an excuse to do what they want to do. Could they not have improved their cars ten years ago? *Certainly!* Just all part of this big Babylonian system. By the way, did you know that most of the Ford Escort motors that are the same ones that are in Mazda? Made by the Mazda Corp., which Ford Motor Co. owns 40% of the stock.

That's why this is here, v 9: "Then the kings of the earth who have committed fornication with her and have lived luxuriously will weep and lament for her..." Sounds like the congress, they got caught in the 'rubber-gate scam.' They're all bewailing and moaning. 'Yes, some of us have been thrown into jail for bouncing a check, but oh, I've only done this 800 times,' says Bob Davis of Michigan, 'please forgive me'! Or Barbara Boxer: 'I am for fiscal responsibility and no debt.' What happens? It crashed in on her!

"...weep and lament for her..." (v 9). How about the one man who wrote a bad check and the police came and arrested him, handcuffed him, took him off and he spent three years in jail for a \$695 check. Yet, the grossness of the congressmen back there writing checks in the six-figures! It's going to happen worse for Babylon. What has Babylon done to all the nations of the world? *Got them all in debt! Government debt! Government spending!* Then we have to tax the people, so now we need a Federal Reserve. Every nation in the world has a central bank, all owned by the international bankers, who are all controlled by the big elite of the world, who all then are controlled by Satan the devil! That's the way it is, and isn't it going to be so easy when *the mark of the beast* comes.

That's how *the beast* is going to be able to come in power and this Babylon the Great is going to grip the whole world, because all nations are indebted. They can't get out of it! Then we have this obscene congress and this obscene President. That's all a part of the Babylonian system. Are they enslaved? *Yes!* Is the nation enslaved? *Yes!*

"...and lament for her when they see the smoke of her burning. They will stand far off for fear of her torment, saying, "Woe, woe, the great city Babylon, the mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come." And the merchants of the earth

will weep and mourn over her, because no one will buy their merchandise anymore” (vs 9-11). *Hooray! A sudden end to the whole thing!* You’ve got to destroy the whole system! You can’t repair this system! That’s why it’s going to have to be destroyed!

Verse 12: “*The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and every article of ivory, and every article of rare wood, and brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and incense, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour...*” (vs 12-13). This sounds like World Imports. You walk in there and you can smell all these things when you walk in.

“...and wheat, and cattle, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and *the* souls of men. For the ripe fruits that your soul desires will depart from you, and all the rich things and the bright things will depart from you, and you will not find them any more. The merchants of these things, who were made rich by her, will stand far off because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning” (vs 13-15). What a fulfillment of James 4-5.

Verse 16: “And saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, which *was* clothed with fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! For in one hour such great wealth has been destroyed.’ And every shipmaster, and all traveling in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, will stand far off. And they will cry out as they watch the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What city is like this great city?’ And they will throw dust on their heads, and cry out, weeping and mourning, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, by which all who had ships in the sea were made wealthy through *the* abundance of her costly things! For in one hour she has been destroyed.’ Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you Holy apostles and prophets; for God has executed judgment upon her for your sakes” (vs 16-20).

Note Matt. 6—there are two very important things that relates about today and tomorrow.

- v 11: Pray every day ‘give us this day our daily bread’
- v 24: ‘no man can serve God and mammon’

Then he says ‘consider the lily of the field and all that sort of thing.

Matthew 13:22—talks about one of the most difficult things that people have to understand and discern:

- How would you feel if you had \$10,000

cash in your purse or billfold vs how you would feel if you didn’t have a single penny? *You would feel secure and insecure!*

- What is that security?

That security is a *false* feeling. Just imagine how quickly the difference between security and insecurity would be if after you had the \$10,000 and you felt great and marvelous and you’re going to do this and that and the other thing, and then you run on down to the bank and they give you the bad news: all of this is counterfeit! Where did you get it? *Immediate insecurity!* Especially if they come and lay the handcuffs on you.

Matthew 13:22: “And the one who was sown among the thorns is the one who hears the Word, but the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches...” That’s the big thing about profit and money and riches. You have a deceitful security because of what it represents in your hands to do things for you. So therefore, that’s why James is saying: don’t go say you’re going to make a profit, you’re going to do this, you’re going to do that, you’re going to do the other thing, because you don’t even know what tomorrow’s going to bring. That’s not to say we’re not to plan. That’s not to say we’re not to have right fiscal responsibility.

This is always something that is true, Luke 16:8: “And the lord praised the unrighteous steward, because he had acted prudently. For the children of this world are more prudent in their own generation than the children of light.” *In business affairs!*

I’ve seen this so true; happen over and over again! How many businesses that people who are in the Church fail? Not because they don’t try; not necessarily because it’s their fault. *They are just not wise in the way of merchandising in this world!* The biggest difficulty that people will have is that in order to run a business honestly you can’t run it in the world.

Then he goes on and says, v 9: “And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness...” Not that you’re going to partake in evil things, but because you may need a job or you may need something don’t cut off everybody in the world totally. There’s at least some value to you that’s going to come of it.

“...so that, when you fail, they may receive you into the **age-lasting** dwellings” (v 9). Not everlasting, but ‘age’ lasting, from the time of Christ until He returns, which then affects your life as long as you live.

Some people will say: How are these people, who are crooked, living in the world of merchandising going to make it into heaven? ‘How

are they going to get me into heaven?" is what a Protestant would say. That's not what it means. "...age-lasting dwellings"—in other words for your own living you'll be able, from people in the world, make enough money to survive even in tough times. That's what it's talking about here.

Verse 10: "The one who *is* faithful in *the things that are* least is also faithful in much; and the one who *is* unrighteous in *the things that are* least is also unrighteous in much." Can you believe it! The week I'm giving this sermon is the week that Congress got caught! That is amazing!

Verse 11: "Therefore, if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you the true *riches*? And if you have not been faithful in that which *is* another's, who will give to you your own?.... [that sounds like the Congressional Bank] ...No servant is able to serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and he will love the other; or he will hold to *the* one and will despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.' Now the Pharisees, who were also covetous, heard all these things; and they ridiculed Him. And He [Jesus] said to them, 'You are those who justify themselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination before God'" (vs 11-15). Notice how James' writing concerning these things are right smack on the dot.

Now, let's look at some proper business things we're to do, Luke 19, the parable of the talents and the pounds. This is an interesting one here, too. Here is an example to show that even a tax collector—whom we all do not care for—can be doing what is right. This is Zaccheus.

Luke 19:8: "Then Zaccheus stood *and* said to the Lord, 'Behold, the half of my possessions, Lord, I give to the poor...' What was he doing with his wealth? He was doing what was right! That's also what James was talking about; he said the 'workers you've deprived of, etc.

"...and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I return fourfold" (v 8). That's follows along with the Biblical principle: If a man steal sheep and it be found in his hand alive, he shall restore fourfold. If they be dead, he shall restore fivefold. So, he's following a Biblical principle here.

Verse 9: "And Jesus said to him, 'Today, salvation has come to this house, inasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which is lost.' Now, as they were listening to these things, He went on to speak a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they thought that the Kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. Therefore, He said, 'A certain

nobleman set out to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and to return. And after calling ten of his servants, he gave to them ten pounds, and said to them, "**Trade until I come back**"'" (vs 9-13). That is work, do with it, increase it.

Verse 14: "But his citizens hated him and sent an ambassador after him, saying, 'We are not willing to have this man reign over us.' And it came to pass that when he returned after receiving the kingdom, he directed that those servants to whom he had given the money be called to him, in order that he might know what each one had gained **by trading**" (vs 14-15).

- right trading
- right merchandising
- right business principles involved

Verse 16: "And the first one came up, saying, 'Lord, your pound has produced ten pounds.' Then he said to him, 'Well *done*, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.' And the second one came, saying, 'Lord, your pound has made five pounds.' Then he also said to this one, 'And you be over five cities.' But another came, saying, 'Lord, behold your pound, which I kept laid up in a handkerchief. For I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man. You take up what you did not lay down, and you reap what you did not sow.' Then he said to him, 'Out of your *own* mouth I will judge you, *you* wicked servant! You knew that I am a harsh man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow'" (vs 16-22).

Why? *Because if you put God into the equation, He can bless you in those things that you can't see*, which appears that God is an austere man when you try and go out and do it on your own. Or it appears that nothing is going to happen from what you're doing when you go out and do it on your own. If you haven't asked God to bless it, how can God bless it?

{Rev. 3:1-9, referring to the Church at Sardis, which is nearly dead.} Here's the minimum:

Verse 23: "Then why didn't you deposit my money in the bank, so that at my coming I might have received it with interest?"

So, the principle of a nominal or reasonable amount of interest is okay. Usury refers to that which gets into the 18, 20, 30—and even some of the records from Babylon shows 40-percent—interest per year. Some of the clay tablets where they're merchandizing of Babylon—*40% interest!* I wonder if those were the Mafia records of old Babylon—who knows! Makes you wonder!

- this was a minimum



- this shows a right principle
- this shows things done in a right way

Verse 24: “And he said to those who were standing by, ‘Take the pound from him, and give it to the one who has ten pounds.’ (And they said to him, ‘Lord, he has ten pounds.’).... [Is God a Communist? Does everybody get equal treatment? *No! No!*] ...For I tell you that to everyone who has, *more* shall be given; but the one who does not have, even what he has shall be taken from him. Moreover, bring my enemies, those who were not willing *for* me to reign over them, and slay *them* here before me” (vs 24- 27).

There are several other places which also tells us about what God is going to do in situations like that: ‘The last shall be first and the first shall be last.’ It’s going to be upon an individual effort and upon God’s blessing, and only through His grace that we’re all going to make it into the Kingdom of God anyway!

Let’s see some Proverbs that show us the right way and the wrong way to conduct business. Of course, the book of Proverbs has an awful lot in it that has to do with how to conduct life on a day-to-day basis and, of course, there’s quite a bit to do about business and what kind of business and how to conduct your business. Here’s a great principle that we have, and this is something that we’re going to see that is absolutely true:

Proverbs 10:2: “Treasures of wickedness profit nothing... [That goes along exactly with what James is showing.] ...but righteousness delivers from death.”

(go to the next track)

Verse 3: “The LORD will not allow the soul of the righteous to famish...” That goes along with what David said, that he has never seen the righteous go hungry. They have founded a lot of these programs for the poor that if they get them turned to Christ—even in the way that the churches of this world have it—and they start ordering their lives aright, according to the Ten Commandments—they start doing the things that are right—within three years, even those in the middle of the ghettos, are out of poverty. So, it is true, God will not allow the soul of the righteous to famish.

“...but He thwarts the desire of the wicked” (v 3). It doesn’t matter how much that they gain. It doesn’t matter how much that they gather. It’s going to be cast away.

Here’s another lesson about how to conduct our work, our business, our lives, and so forth, v 4: “He who deals with a lazy hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.” Very basic

principle in everything that is done: There is no such thing as creativity without work, without perspiration first.

Another thing that’s important that I think is wrong with the educational society of this world today. They have the totally wrong philosophy toward creativity. The philosophy is let the children do anything they want to and let them be creative. That is wrong, because what they end being is chaotic.

- creativity needs discipline
- creativity needs direction
- creativity needs goals
- creativity needs accomplishment

So, therefore, what is really the thing to be done to prepare someone for being creative is that they must learn the basics: *rote memorization!* Then when they have all of the basic information, then when they have all of these things, then they can become creative in putting them together in new and interesting and better and different ways. That comes by having a diligent hand.

Verse 5: “He who gathers in summer *is* a wise son, but he who sleeps in harvest *is* a son who causes shame. Blessings *are* upon the head of the just, but violence covers the mouth of the wicked” (vs 5-6).

Proverbs 11:1—here’s something that we also know and is also true: “False balances *are* an abomination to the LORD, but a perfect weight *is* His delight.” They have it now that they can still weigh the thumb of the meat man in the meat package by saying that because of different contents and moisture, you can have 15 oz in a package and still label it 16 oz. Even the laws are worked out that way.

Verse 4: “Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.” This is absolutely true! Let’s apply this to the Laodicean Church who think that they have the riches and that’s going to get them through. But the day of wrath comes and it doesn’t get them through. Therefore, they have to really scurry around and do the things they need to do and so forth.

Here is something that we all ought to know. We need to crank this into our thoughts and our planning. This is not to say that we are not to plan. That’s not the implication here. The planning then has to be that we plan according to God’s will. And within our own particular lives and the things that we do in our work, our employment and our job and our business and our home, God allows us a lot of different things that we can do, which are all within the realm of the will of God, because they’re

according to the commandments of God.

James 4:14: “You do not even know what *will happen* tomorrow!...” None of us do! Absolutely none of us know exactly what’s going to happen tomorrow, but that doesn’t mean you don’t set the alarm to get up in the morning to get ready to go to work and then leave and go to work and arrive at work on time—whatever the situation may be. He’s saying to those who say, ‘Let’s get our caravan and let’s go for a year and let’s conduct business, let’s trade, let’s make a profit and all of this referring to the illegal gain, to the ill-gotten gain, to the deceitful gain.

He’s saying, ‘Look, you don’t even know what’s going to happen tomorrow: “...For what is your life? It is even a vapor... [Your life is a vapor! It’s here today, it’s gone tomorrow!] ...vapor that appears for a little while, and then disappears. Instead, you *ought* to say, ‘If the Lord wills we will live, and we will do this or that’” (vs 14-15).

We’re going to compare these two as we go through—between those who are so arrogant and proud that they think that they can totally plan tomorrow, totally know the future, totally work everything out vs those who understand that their lives are just a vapor and it could be gone tomorrow. If we seek the will of the Lord, then we’re going to have the blessing of the Lord just like we found here in the Proverbs concerning conducting our business, conducting our lives, conducting our work—and all of those things all apply.

We’re going to see that James 1 ties right back into the very first chapter, one of the very first things that James wrote in his epistle concerning what life is. Again, he says to the rich:

James 1:10: “And *let* the one who is rich *rejoice* in his humble condition...” In other words, to a rich person being a Christian really puts them into a humble condition. Why? Because in the congregation he is no greater than what he may consider the least of anyone. He gives this analogy:

“...because as *the* flower of *the* field, he himself will pass away; for the sun rises with *its* burning heat and dries up the grass, and its flower falls off, and its beautiful appearance perishes. In the same way also shall the rich man wither in his pursuits” (vs 10-11). That is obviously if he is not putting God first.

We saw the example of Zaccheus who obviously was putting God first, who was doing what he should have been doing with the money, with the funds, with his income and everything that he was receiving.

Let’s see some more concerning how we

need to conduct our lives. There’s another thing, too, that is really an attitude today. It’s always been an attitude, but it’s certainly being played on in this political year. Somehow the rich are always terrible and evil. If we only had their money then we would be better. That’s not exactly Biblical. Let’s see a couple of things on how we are to conduct our lives. Here’s what we need to do living in this world. We see it so much around us on every side.

Psalms 37:1: “Do not fret yourself because of evildoers, and do not be envious against the workers of iniquity.” That is, ‘Oh, look at all the money they have. Oh, they got the cars. They have the houses and the clothes. When they walk down the street everybody recognizes them. It would be so nice.’ Well, when you pull back the veil on the lives of a lot of rich people, you find that their lives are really quite empty.

That’s why he says, “...do not be envious against the workers of iniquity, for they shall soon be cut down like the grass; and wither as the green herb” (vs 1-2). That’s just the whole theme that we have just covered in James 1 & 4.

Here’s what we need to do, v 3: “Trust in the LORD, and do good...” It’s kind of strange why that is always so hard to do. Since we know, we can agree, we’re probably sitting there shaking our head:

- yes, life is but grass
- yes, I’m just a vapor
- yes, I don’t know what’s going to happen tomorrow
- yes, I know that life could be terminated:
  - ✓ I could have a heart attack
  - ✓ I could step out in front of car
  - ✓ I could fall off a cliff
  - ✓ I could be in a plane that would crash

—whatever the case may be

And yet, how many of us really, on the other hand, trust God? Since life is a vapor; since we are all grass—**why should we not trust God?** *That’s exactly what the whole purpose that James is teaching here.* Same thing that we find in Psalms 37.

Verse 3: “Trust in the LORD and do good...” You may not make the profit of the wicked. You may not turn the merchandise that the wicked do. But, if you do good, *you’re stirring up treasures in heaven*, riches where no one is going to get it and where ‘moth and rust does not consume it.’

“...dwell in the land, and cherish faithfulness.... [God is going to take care of you] ...Delight yourself in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.”

- What is the greatest desire of our heart

that we ought to have?

- To be in the Kingdom of God? *Yes!*

And to be in the Kingdom of God then means that *we are going to have the true riches!* Not just the riches that come and go, but *the riches which last for eternity!*

Let's also see something extremely important even in the attitude of David that he had toward himself even being king:

Psalms 16:1: "Preserve me, O God, for in You do I take refuge." Again, that trust. That trust comes how? *By bringing God into your life, even in the mundane business things that you do!*

Verse 2: "I have said to the LORD, 'You are my LORD; I have no goodness apart from You.' As for the saints in the earth, 'They are the excellent ones in whom is all my delight'" (vs 2-3).

Verse 7: "I will bless the LORD Who has given me counsel; my heart also instructs me in the nights." That means

- he meditates at night
- he thinks of God at night
- he asks God to direct his life and so forth

Verse 8: "I have set the LORD always before Me..." Doesn't this sound like a very familiar Scripture we're supposed to memorize? *Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and then all of these physical things will be added to you* (Matt. 6).

"...Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore, My heart is glad, and My glory rejoices; My flesh also shall rest in safety" (vs 8-9). Here's a prophecy of Jesus, in the life of Jesus and all that He went through.

Here's the promise that was given, v 10: "For You will not abandon My soul to the grave; neither will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will make known to Me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy. At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (vs 10-11). This is what we really need to understand in our lives so we can apply what James is teaching.

Psalms 37:4: "Delight yourself in the LORD..." Tie that in with Isa. 56 & 58 where it talks about the Sabbath; especially Isa. 58:13 where it says, 'If you will call the Sabbath Holy, a delight unto the Lord.' Whatever God tells us to do:

- is a delight
- it is right
- it is good
- it is Holy

- it is fine

—that's why we need to set everything according to the will of God.

Here's the promise, "...and He shall give you the desires of your heart. **Commit your way unto the LORD...**" (vs 4-5). What did James say? *If the Lord will!* Is that not committing your way to the Lord? *Yes, it is!*

"...trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth your righteousness like the light, and your judgment like the noonday" (vs 4-6).

'Submit yourself to the Lord, humble yourself before God and He will raise you up in due time.' All of these things all tie together with it.

Verse 7: "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret yourself because of him who prospers in his way, because of him who carries out wicked schemes. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret yourself, it leads only to evil, for evildoers shall be cut off, but **those who wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth**" (vs 7-9). You think about that! And what kind of earth are we going to inherit? A glorified earth! We are going to inherit New Jerusalem!

All of the so-called riches of this world are NOTHING but a mirage in the desert. They come and go with the heat and they just disappear and evaporate and are gone. Isa. 40 ties right in with so much that James writes about and talks about. When you really think about it, James must have spent an awful lot of time writing the final draft of this epistle. Every word is weighty. Every word shows a tremendous knowledge of the Bible, and a tremendous application of it, and how to take that and to put into the everyday use of our lives.

Isaiah 40:3: "A voice is calling out in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked places shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken'" (vs 3-5).

And those days are coming, and when those days come, believe me, all of the wealth and all of the riches and all of the treasure and all of the fortification of the rich is going to be gone, utterly worthless and spent and of no account whatsoever.

Verse 6: "A voice says, 'Cry!' And he said, 'What shall I cry?' 'All flesh is grass...'" Does that sound like James? *Yes!* Does that not sound like

Jesus? *Yes!*

“...and all the beauty of it *is* as the flower of the field.... [Is that not what we read in James? *Sure!*] ...The grass withers, the flower fades...” (vs 6-7). That is so true!

- time marches on
- we’re here today, gone tomorrow
- we’re a vapor that comes and goes

And when James says, ‘What is your life? It is even a vapor’ That means that your life is a vapor, obviously, compared to God and the power of God and the strength of God. Here it is, it’s so clear.

Verse 7: “The grass withers, the flower fades because the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people *are* grass. **The grass withers, the flower fades; but the Word of our God shall stand forever**” (vs 7-8).

That’s why we need to bring God into our lives, even into the difficult times; *even into the things of our daily business and our daily work*, because then we are truly bringing everything that we’re doing into the realm of the blessing of God.

Let’s look at the true riches. Let’s see then, on the other hand, what God is holding out for us. Let’s understand something about the calling that God has given us, and how great it is and how marvelous it is and how absolutely fantastic that it is. As we sit here and think about this and talk about it and read these Scriptures and go through them, we need to ask ourselves: **Do you consider the things that you are going through to be worth entering into the Kingdom of God?**

I know there are a lot of people who think they had a difficult deal; *maybe you have*. I know there are a lot of people who think the minister treated them harshly; *I’m sure that is true*. I’m sure that you have had situations where that you’ve had to leave a church that you’ve been attending because they are leaving the Word of God; *I understand that*.

But we need to also realize that what is going to cause us to rise above those trials and difficulties—so that we can succeed, so that we can obtain to the Kingdom of God—is to have more in mind of what God is going to give us; to have more in mind the real wealth of our calling. Too many times we’re—because we’re so physical in what we can see, touch, taste and buy and sell and manipulate and use—to us that represents something that is real because it is now.

However, you can’t see the universe, but it’s real and it is there, and ***the things that are not seen***—being God, Christ, the Family of God, and the future that is going to be at the return of Christ—

***clearly are the things of the greatest value!*** Those are the things that are eternal. Those are things that we are going to receive to have and to hold and to live by for all eternity. So, when we put in that perspective then we can change our attitudes concerning bringing God into our daily lives, because God is interested in the things in our daily lives. God wants to know the things that are in our daily lives. And whether we think that God knows or not, God knows everything. In the final analysis, who’s kidding whom?

Ephesians 1:4: “According as **He has personally chosen us** for Himself...” That is quite a statement. That one could represent a sermon or two in itself. But let’s stop and think about this for just one minute. The greatest Being in the universe—God the Father Himself—*has chosen you and me* and all of those that God calls, ***He has chosen in Christ Jesus***.

Just a little aside here:

- Is it not very foolish for an organization to say then that the only ones that really belong to God are in this corporate structure of this physical church?
- Are they not limiting God when they say that?
- Are they not trying to restrict God when they say that?
- Are they not trying to tell God whom He can and cannot choose?
- And whom He will and will not work with?

They may not realize it, but that’s exactly what they are doing. So, ***God the Father is the One Who chose us!*** What is that worth?

When I was in the real estate loan business and when I go to some of these loan or real estate offices or with different people that I meet, I have kind of a little standard joke that I always bring out. I say, ‘Well, where is that million dollar check that you said you would write for me?’ Of course, everyone gets a laugh out of it, and say, ‘If I write it, then I’ll split it with you.’

Or I also kid them and say, ‘What was the winning numbers in the lotto and did you win it?’ And they’d get a big laugh out of that. Or, did you send off for that Reader’s Digest Publisher’s Clearing House contest and did you win the \$10-million check? And they’d get a kick out of that.

A lot of people set their whole lives and their hopes on winning from gambling, winning from lotteries, winning from giveaways. ***But the greatest and most wealthy and most fantastic riches***

**come from God, because He has chosen you!** You put that in the forefront of your mind and keep that there.

“...chosen us for Himself before *the* foundation of *the* world in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love” (v 4).

If you're feeling kind of low and if you're feeling kind of down, and if you feel that James is 'stabbing me in the heart' with all of these things, because 'I find myself falling so short.' Listen, ***with the grace of God you stand before Him blameless!*** You're not going to be out seeking to do evil, that's for sure. But because of the conviction of sin that you have, and because of your own inadequacies and shortcoming—and I find myself in that, too, so I'm preaching to me just as well as you—***that we stand before Him Holy and without blemish, before Him in love!***

“...before *the* foundation of *the* world in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love; having predestinated us for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will” (vs 4-5).

***God Who is love***—Who is the Author of love, giving, serving, caring, kindness, goodness, and every wonderful adjective that we could praise God with—***is going to take care of His Family!***

He chose us “...for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will... [and that means His own will and desire] ...to *the* praise of *the* glory of His grace, wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*; in Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (vs 5-7).

Let's understand how important the riches of the grace of God are. ***No amount of money in the world can buy it!*** Therefore, it is the most expensive thing that can be. And yet, in the contradictions to the human mind, it is the cheapest because it's free. However, the cost, on the other hand, is still the greatest, ***because it cost the life of Jesus Christ***, the only begotten Son of God, to forgive your sins. ***It cost you your life*** to be buried in Christ, so that you may be partaker of these riches.

If we can keep all of these things in mind, and understand these, then we can get more of perspective of how evil that this whole business world is and the whole atmosphere is and all of these things are compared to what God has for us.

Verse 17—here's his prayer: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you *the* spirit of wisdom and revelation in *the* knowledge of Him.” There is the greatest insider

trading you could ever want. That you have the knowledge of God and the revelation of Him.

Verse 18: “*And* may the eyes of your mind be enlightened...” That's why God is so angry and upset at so many ministers and churches that cut this off from people.

I see this so often: that people who have been baptized 10, 15, 20, 30 years or more, have not been taught; do not know God's way the way they ought to. They want to, but they haven't been taught, because the ministers have been so interested in the politics and the religion of churches—numbers, money, cars, homes and all of the things that James says is just going to pass away—***that they've totally neglected the true wealth of God, the spiritual things that they need to be teaching the brethren!***

After all that is what we need to do: to teach the brethren to grow in grace and knowledge and all grow together. I know that one of the most exhilarating things that you can ever experience in your life is when you are studying the Word of God and BING! ***the light shines and you understand!*** You grasp it! Brethren, that's what we need to do. Keep our eyes on that!

Verse 18: “*And* may the eyes of your mind be enlightened in order that you may comprehend what is the hope of His calling... [tremendous and awesome and wonderful hope] ...and what *are* the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.”

There's going to be the riches of His glory; the riches and the power of that glory. That is going to be given to the very sons of God, to those who are going to be in the Kingdom of God. After all, those are the true riches and those are the true, absolute marvelous things of God, which are going to last forever. It's not going to be like the grass or the flowers and dry up.

Here's what God wants; here's what Paul says he was praying that God would do for every one of us:

Ephesians 3:16: “That He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory...” He's going to talk about the most wonderful and powerful and fantastic thing that there ever can be in your life, which is:

“...to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith... [because you're trusting in Him] ...and that being rooted and grounded in love...” (vs 16-18). That's what it has to be.

{note sermon series on the Epistles of John—in particular 1-John—and the love of God} That is really something!

“...that being rooted and grounded in love, you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge; so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (vs 18-19).

That is the whole and complete plan of God, that, yes, we can be the very sons of God! Clothed with glory, spirit, wealth and righteousness.

Verse 20: “Now, to Him Who is able... [has the power] ...to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us, to Him *be* glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity. Amen” (vs 20-21).

That, brethren, is what we need to focus into. If you are really seeking the true riches of God, that’s what we’ll focus in on.

I saw an advertisement the other night, the man said, ‘Ya’ll come to my free seminar and I will show you how to make all kinds of money and wealth and riches and I guarantee that you’re really going to make lots and lots of money.’ Showing all these people driving around in Lincolns and wearing diamond rings and expensive clothing and all this sort of thing. I said to myself, I know if you go to that seminar there’s a hook in it some place.

There is no hook, brethren, into God’s calling! He wants *you* totally—100%—absolutely completely so that He can do the following:

Colossians 1:26: “*Even* the mystery that has been hidden from ages and from generations...” In other words, until Christ came no one even had the faintest idea of what God’s plan was or what it would entail or what God had in store for His saints.

“...but has now been revealed to His saints; to whom God did will to make known what *are* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (vs 26-27).

That I submit is the greatest, most wealthy, most wonderful, most expensive, greatest treasure that you could have in the world, which is ***Christ in you!*** Therefore, it doesn’t matter if your circumstances in the world are rich or poor, young or old. Whatever the situation, if Christ is in you that is the greatest wealth.

That’s why it’s so very, very important for us to realize and understand James 4:14: “You do not even know what *will happen* tomorrow! For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little while, and then disappears. Instead, you *ought* to say, ‘If the Lord wills we will live, and we will do

this or that”” (vs 14-15).

Now, I want you put in your notes these Scriptures—with this thought in mind: The success of the world brings the glamour of people, but the success with God makes only temporary friends in the world. That’s true, because you have to love God first with all your heart, mind, soul and being, and then you have to do as Jesus said here:

- Matt. 4:4—man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.
- Luke 4:4—says the same thing
- Deut. 8:3—says the same thing
- We’re also in seeking the will of the Lord always put that first!

I call to your attention the example of Jesus just before He was arrested and then led off to be tried and crucified:

- Luke 22:42—nevertheless, Father, not My will but Your will be done
- Eph. 5:17—we’re also to be understanding and knowing the will of God

Colossians 3:17—here’s how we’re to conduct our lives in accordance with James 4:15—“And *in* everything—whatever you do in word or in deed—*do* all in *the* name of *the* Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and *the* Father by Him.” *Everything!*

***That’s why when you ask God to bless your day, let it be a blessing indeed! Let it be according to the riches and fullness and the goodness and the grace of God!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* (except where noted)

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) James 5:20
- 2) Hebrews 13:24-25
- 3) James 4:13-17
- 4) James 5:1-7
- 5) James 4:13
- 6) Ezekiel 28:17-18
- 7) Revelation 18:7-20
- 8) Matthew 13:22
- 9) Luke 16:8-15
- 10) Luke 19:8-27
- 11) Proverbs 10:2-3, 5-6
- 12) Proverbs 11:1, 4
- 13) James 4:14-15
- 14) James 1:10-11
- 15) Psalm 37:1-4
- 16) Psalm 16:1-3, 7-11
- 17) Psalm 37:4-9

- 18) Isaiah 40:3-8
- 19) Ephesians 1:4-7, 17-18
- 20) Ephesians 3:16-21
- 21) Colossians 1:26-27
- 22) James 4:14-15
- 23) Colossians 3:17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 6:11, 24; 25
- Revelation 3:1-9
- Isaiah 56; 58:13
- Matthew 4:4
- Luke 4:4
- Deuteronomy 8:3
- Luke 22:42
- Ephesians 5:17

Also referenced: Sermon Series: *Epistles of John*

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## Epistle of James XIII

### Endure and Look to the God of All Comfort

Fred R. Coulter

James 4:13: “Now listen, those of you who say, ‘Today and tomorrow we will go into such a city, and we will spend a year, and we will conduct business and make a profit.’ You do not even know what *will happen* tomorrow! For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little while, and then disappears. Instead, you *ought to* say, ‘If the Lord wills we will live, and we will do this or that.’ But now you boast in your own arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, *if* anyone knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin” (vs 13-17).

First of all we need to understand that there is nothing in the world that is going to be against the will of God—*period!* That does not mean that God is going to interfere and make a person do any one thing or the other. Why is that so? *Free agency!* If God gives free agency, it must be free agency, which means that you have to choose.

Now, what if you choose the wrong thing? Is God going to stop you from choosing the wrong thing? No, He’s not! Unless He’s got a job for you to do, then God is going to intervene. You can look at Jonah. Jonah is a good example of that. He didn’t want to do the will of God. He chose the wrong thing, but God said, ‘no, I can’t let you do that because you’ve got to do what I told you to do.’ I’m talk just about the average person. If God gives free moral agency, He gives free moral agency! In a sense, even with Jonah, God did allow him to choose certain things to do, but He said, ‘I’m going to show you what needs to be done.’

Everything needs to be according to the will of God. Let’s see that even Jesus Christ—the night He was arrested—He put everything in God’s hands, according to the will of God. Of course, that’s supposed to be the first part of our prayer—isn’t it? ‘Our Father in heaven, Holy is Your name, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’ It’s going to be! And that what Jesus did knowing He was going to be arrested and crucified.

Luke 22:41: “And He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw; and falling to *His* knees, He prayed, saying, ‘Father, if You are willing to take away this cup from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Your *will* be done’” (vs 41-42).

He never asked for His own will. He started out by saying, “...**If You are willing**...” appealing to the will of God. Then He said, “...nevertheless, not My will, but **Your will** be done.” So, even Jesus had it on that level.

Colossians 3:17 gives us a little more understanding about the will of God and also how we are to live our lives and put it in such a way. In spite of the troubles I’ve had with my car, I’m sure it was not the will of God that my car breakdown again. It was the will of the machine. I had to work around that, but I still got done what I needed to get done. God intervened and got me a ride right away and it was right down to where I needed to get the rent-a-car. So, here’s how then once you ask for God’s will to be done then you do this:

Colossians 3:17: “And *in* everything—whatever you do in word or in deed—...” Whatever you’re doing, that follows right along with what James was saying:

- include God in on your life
- include God in your business
- include God in everything that you do

—here’s an overall summary: “...*do* all in *the* name of *the* Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and *the* Father by Him” (v 17).

There’s a perfect way, as a complete guidepost or motto, on how we need to live our lives. Whatever we do, we put it in God’s hands. I know that there are many things now that I say to God, ‘God, I just don’t know.’ You think: What are you going to do? You just say, ‘God, I don’t know what I should do. Help me to see what I should do.’ I think if we did that more, as it is here, then our lives will be more in line with what God wants them to be.

Ephesians also talks about the will of God. This is why we need to study the Bible, the Word of God and apply it to our lives in a daily way, such as James is teaching us.

Ephesians 5:17: “For this reason, do not be foolish, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*.” That’s what we are to be understanding! How are we to know the will of God? *By studying God’s Word!*

James 4:16: “But now you boast in your own arrogance....” This has quite an interesting thing to it; it actually means that you are boasting in how good your quackery is. *It’s vain and empty!* Like the one who sells ‘snake oil’ for \$2. You’ve seen these old westerns where they sell this ‘snake oil.’ They still do it today. Only thing is they have an 800-number. You can call in and get your own ‘snake oil’—boasting what a great thing it is.



Let's go to Proverbs and see some things concerning evil boasting, arrogance, pride, money and profit. The book of Proverbs is tremendous, if you want to know different things to do on a daily living basis, the book of Proverbs is fantastic.

Proverbs 20:14—and this is so true concerning buying and selling: “*It is bad! It is bad!*” says the buyer...” ‘It ain’t worth that much; I’m not going to pay that much for it. You know that this thing, if I bought it new, it would be \$5,000. I’m not going to give you \$2,500 for it. I’m going to give you \$500 for it.’

“...but when he has gone his way, then he boasts” (v 14). ‘Look what a deal I found, I really ripped this guy off. I really got the best of him.’ That’s exactly what it’s talking about.

Verse 17: “Bread of deceit *is* sweet to a man, but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.” We can think of Charles Keating—Lincoln Savings and Loan—who sold all of these worthless junk bonds to all of these people. And all of these people thought, ‘I’m really going to get it. I’m really going to make it.’ Because Keating said, ‘You can make 7% in your savings account here at the bank, but if you buy these bonds, which the bank is selling, you’re going to earn 15%. So, greed on both sides said, ‘Yeah, that’s a good deal.’ What happened? They’re all ‘eating gravel’! The bonds are no good. Keating is in jail. And we could go on and on and on with a lot of examples we could use to show how this proverb applies.

Here’s the same thing, Proverbs 21:6: “The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro by those who seek death.” You could almost make a movie of that! Quite a descriptive verse!

You could put in there all kinds of con games. They just had to cut off the phone privilege from a man who was in jail, who was calling women. He would put a little ad in the paper and they would call this number and ask for him, and he would con them into sending him money—he didn’t tell them he was in prison—and he would do certain things for them. Right there in jail. You talk about crass. Couldn’t believe it. Think about that the next time you buy a used car or whatever.

Verse 7: “The robbery of the wicked shall destroy... [Isn’t that the theme of many, many movies? *They end up destroying themselves!*] ...them because they refuse to do what is just.”

James 4:16: “...All such boasting is evil.” That is rejoicing in sin! I’ll just refer you to Dan. 4 about Nebuchadnezzar. Remember what happened to Nebuchadnezzar. He said, ‘Oh boy, I’ve built this

big city, this is great, by my hand’ and ZAPPO! he got it; he got called into judgment.

Verse 17: “Therefore, *if* anyone knows to do good... [this is talking about having left the right way and then going back and doing the wrong way] ...and does not do *it*, to him it is sin.”

2-Peter 2—this concerns more than just business practices; this concerns everything. This concerns the knowledge of Truth, the things concerning Passover. We’ll see how this ties right in with ‘great swelling words of vanity’ and so forth.

2-Peter 2:18: “For they speak bombastic words of vanity, enticing *others* through *the* lusts of *the* flesh by granting indulgences to sin, and *ensnaring* those who had indeed escaped from those who live in deception. While promising them freedom, they themselves are actually slaves of corruption because by whatever anyone is overcome, he is also held in bondage. For if, after escaping the moral defilements of the world through *the* knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...” (vs 18-20).

- They have known Truth!
- They have known to do good!

“...they again become entangled in them, and are overcome... [completely given themselves over to the evil] ...the final end is worse than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing *it*, to turn back from the Holy commandment *that was* delivered to them. But the *pronouncement found* in the true proverb has happened to them: *The dog has returned to eat his own vomit; and the sow that was washed has returned to her wallowing place in the filthy mire*” (vs 20-22).

That’s what James saying here when he’s saying, James 4:17: “Therefore, *if* anyone knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin.”

Here’s what’s going to happen to everyone, every single person; there is going to be no escape from this; Romans 14:10: “Now then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”

That’s what to remember in it. Also remember this: *If someone else is sinning, you do what you can to help them not sin, but then don’t let your correction itself turn into sin!*

For example: I’ve known people who have seen things that were done in a church that were wrong. They themselves in their condemnation of it end up sinning worse than what they saw was wrong. So, we have the same thing here. Don’t let

what happens turn into sin in your life, because you know that you're going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Verse 11: "Because it is written, "For *as* I live," says *the* Lord, "every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." So then, each one of us shall give account of himself to God" (vs 11-12).

Everyone of us shall give an account of himself to God! {Gen. 3—Adam said, when God ask him, 'Why did you eat?' Ask the woman and she said, 'The serpent.' Which means, they weren't accounting for themselves, they were blaming the other person.} ***Everyone's going to give an account of himself to God!*** That relieves a great burden!

None of us is a 'committee of one' to be God's correcting machine! That saves a lot of grief! *Yes, it does!* Then we know that God is going to take care of it. We have to do our part. If we do our part, and that is not sufficient, they're in God's hands. It's just that simple! We've seen that work.

Verse 13: "Therefore, we should no longer judge one another, but judge this instead: Do not put an occasion of stumbling or a cause of offense before your brother."

Verse 23: "...for everything that *is* not of faith is sin." That has a lot to do with knowing to do good and doing it not and so forth.

We've gotten quite a few sermons out the book of James. Some of these principles here in chapter five we've already covered, so I won't go into them in quite as much detail as I have some of the other things.

James 5:1: "Come now, *you* rich men, weep! Howl over the miseries that are coming upon *you!*" We covered that when we covered Rev. 18—about the fall of Babylon. It's interesting, the Greek word for 'howl' is like crying out to the gods.

Verse 2: "Your riches have rotted, and your garments have become moth-eaten.... [that's because they're not right with God] ...Your gold and *your* silver have been eaten away, and their corrosion will be a testimony against you, and will consume your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth for *the* last days" (vs 2-3).

Four categories of the rich:

1. the rich in the world who are poor to God
2. the poor who are rich in faith (James 1)
3. the poor in world and the poor toward God
4. the rich in this world and also the rich before God

They are rare, but somewhere there's got to be some

that are in that category

We'll see how all of this fits together. Put in your notes, I'll let you look this up: Isa. 2—talks about when God is going to rise and shake the earth and they're going to throw their gold and silver and their idols to the moles and bats and all this sort of thing. That ties in with Rev. 6:12-14. Here's something that is true and we're seeing it happen today, right before our very eyes today under this 'good trade agreement' that we're having.

Verse 4: "Listen! The wages of the workmen who harvested your fields, which have been withheld by you, are crying out; and the cries of those who reaped have entered into the ears of *the* Lord of hosts." It's says in the *King James* 'sabaoth'—which is an untranslatable word, which means 'the Lord of hosts.'

Don't we see this today? How many factories are being closed down in the United States to move overseas for cheap labor to make a profit? *Happening all the time!* What is another way that you've had your labor in the field, you have paid into something and you're never going to see a penny of it? Pensions and Social Security! Demanded and extracted out of you! All part of it.

Here's what happened to the rich people, v 5, "You have lived in luxury upon the earth..." We have the pleasure today of watching Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous with Robin Leach. I think they could not have gotten anyone more perfect for that role, and his name even fits, too. You see how some of those people live. I mean, their bathrooms would be like our bank vault if we had so much.

Verse 5: "You have lived in luxury upon the earth, and *you* have lived in self-gratification; you have nourished your hearts as in *the* day of slaughter." I think that's quite a poignant verse there. We have one example of this in Luke 16 about the parable of the Lazarus and the rich man. So, I'm sure that James is referring back to some of the things here that were taught by Jesus. This was a parable of Jesus.

Luke 16:19: "Now, there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen... [had the best of everything] ...and daily indulged himself in luxury. And there was a certain poor man named Lazarus, who was laid at his porch, full of sores. And he longed to be nourished with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; and the dogs even came and licked his sores" (vs 19-21).

Only ones to have compassion on him were the dogs. So bad, so ugly, so horrible, so terrible that no one even wanted to have anything to do with him.

I can't help but interject here: They've got

this controversy going on, and in my own mind it's hard for me to even imagine. There was this baby girl born whose brain is not there. She had just developed up to the stem of the brain. She can breathe and so forth. Here are all of these greedy doctors going to court and saying, 'Let us kill this baby since it isn't going to live so we can get the organs out of this baby'—the heart, the lungs, the liver and all of this—so 'we can use it for transplants into other people.' I think the judge judged rightly and said, 'No, No, you aren't going to do it.'

It just shows the evil and the greed! Even the mother wanted to do it. But I tell you, when men begin playing God that's when they get in trouble, because they don't know when to stop! What are they going to do with these things? Who knows! What about the genetic code that's on the heart, lungs and liver? *It still carries the defect gene, which made the baby born without a brain!* I mean, that's a terrible situation!

That's just to take advantage of the situation. What you need to do is just put it in God's hands and what happens, happens and let it be. Don't cannibalize the body to sell the parts. Can you imagine what a baby's heart is worth on the open market? *No way!* The doctors are thinking if it saves another baby, well then everything is fine. But you have to get back to the cause of these things. Why do these happen in the first place? What do we do to teach people so that it doesn't happen, in the second place? *It happens because of sin!* Every one of these problems we're dealing with happens because of sin somewhere along the line!

Just like this article on AIDS points out. Condoms aren't going to help anyone, because the very nature of the construction of condoms in relationship to the airspace that's in between the monocular structure of how it's put together with the latex is small enough that the AIDS virus can go right through it! Then we have a situation similar to that back in Philadelphia, this homosexual who paid hundreds to boys to come and have sex with him.

The rich taking advantage of the poor and all of this sort of thing. ***God's judgment is going to come!*** This example of Lazarus and the rich man fits into so many different things. There are those in the world that have the money, that have the power, that have the ability, and they are going to make it happen upon our backs regardless of what happens. And God is saying, ***The judgment day, folks, is going to come!***

Verse 22: "Now, it came to pass *that* the poor man died, and he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom...." This is obviously has to be at the resurrection! How do we know? Rev. 20—the rest of the dead live not until the thousand

years were finished. All those in Christ are resurrected when Christ returns. That's when Abraham is, Isaac is, Jacob is, and so forth.

"...And the rich man also died and was buried." When is He resurrected? At the resurrected at the resurrection for the incorrigible wicked.

Verse 23: "And in the grave he lifted up his eyes and was in torment... [he has consciousness now] ...*for* he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out *and* said, 'Father Abraham, have compassion on me and send Lazarus, so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am suffering because of this flame.' Then Abraham said, "'Child, remember that in your lifetime you received good things to the full, and likewise Lazarus evil things. But now he is comforted, and you are suffering. And besides all these things, between us and you a great chasm...'" (vs 23-26)—between physical life and eternal life—and you can't cross that.

God is showing in this that there's going to come a time when everyone of these evils is going to be rectified. But in the meantime, what it is for us is: it's awfully difficult for us to comprehend why God lets the downtrodden of the earth get so downtrodden. God is going to take care of it in the long run. *We can trust that!*

I won't go through the rest of it, but he said you've had all the good things in your life and now it's Lazarus' turn.

James 5:6—quite a very interesting verse: "You have condemned... [the poor, the workers, and so forth, while living in your luxury] ...***and you have killed the righteous, and he does not resist you.***" The word 'condemned' comes from the Greek word which means has an implication to bring into a court of law.

- Sound a little familiar? *Yes!*
- What are Jews famous for? *Being lawyers!*
- What was one thing they had with their synagogues? *Courts!*

So, this is literally giving the implication that they set their way up through the judgments of the synagogue court to extract what they wanted in legal sense. Is that not what we find today? *Yes, indeed!* I mean, this makes a lot of bells ring in my mind.

"...you have killed the righteous, *and* he does not resist you." We can think of Exxon, Dow Chemical in India and all those poor people there all blinded and killed because of the chemical, just so they can run a profit. They went to court and had everything taken care of legally. That's what it's implying here.

Then he gives a little encouragement to the

poor, v 7: “Therefore, brethren, be patient until the coming of the Lord.... [God is going to work it all out His way] ...Consider the husbandman *who* waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient for it, until it has received *the* former and latter rains.” We can tie many things in there:

- the former and latter rain (Isa. 55:8-11)
- concerning the fruit, which has to do where Christ said, ‘I am the vine, the true vine and My Father is the husbandman; you are the branches’ ( John 15:1-7)
- that ties in with Rev. 14—the resurrection—the harvest of the ‘precious fruit’ is the resurrection of the just

God is patient for it and it’s going to have to have the ‘former and the latter rain.’

Verse 8: “You also be patient. Strengthen your hearts because the coming of the Lord has drawn near.” When he wrote this they were expecting Jesus to return. Of course, one of the things that was a key that Jesus was not going to return soon was when James was martyred (62<sup>A.D.</sup>) So, we know this was written before then.

Verse 9: “Do not complain against one another, brethren, so that you may not be condemned. Behold, *the* Judge stands at the door.” We read a little bit about that: everyone’s going to come before the judgment seat of God.

Verse 10: “My brethren, take the prophets who spoke in the name of *the* Lord as an example of endurance *in* afflictions and of steadfastness.”

Look what Jeremiah went through. Look what Isaiah went through. Look what Ezekiel went through. And poor Ezekiel, he went through more than anybody else as far as a prophet in God asking him to do things. We have to look to that as an example.

Verse 11: “Remember, we call those blessed who endure. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the end result of *serving the* Lord: that the Lord is very compassionate and full of tender mercies.”

We did a couple of sermons on the book of Job and saw what Job went through. And I translated this endurance rather than ‘patience’ because Job was anything but patient. *He endured!* We endure those different things because we don’t know what God has in store—do we? Let’s see about one man, whose particular plight in life was most difficult, so that God could show His works.

John 9:1: “Now, *as Jesus was* passing by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.” That’s quite a situation. Imagine how the mother and father

felt. You have a child that is born blind, most difficult.

Verse 2: “And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’” Isn’t that the question we always ask? *We always do!* And we ask it in such a way it’s not an informational question most of the time. It’s mostly a question of condemnation.

How could someone be born blind and sin, then cause himself to be blind? Obviously, he didn’t do to himself as an infant; he didn’t do himself in the womb. We know there’s a Scripture that says—in the Ten Commandments—about idolatry that the sin comes down—the second commandment—to the second and third and fourth generations—doesn’t it? This was a legitimate question to ask, but notice His answer:

Verse 3: “Jesus answered, ‘Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; rather, *this blindness came* so that the works of God might be manifested in him.’” That’s quite a statement!

This is why you have such things as killing the handicapped is wrong, why killing this baby the way it was is wrong; let God take care of that. Who knows what God may have in store for that individual? I know in my lifetime I’ve been put to shame many times by my own attitude toward some situation when a person has a handicap or something. They just put me to shame! I think one of the reasons that these things happen and are there to show us *that we don’t take God in a very contemptuous way!* That there’s more to life than our own ends, our own means, our own goals and our own life. Think about that, being born blind for this very work!

There are some things of suffering that we don’t understand and maybe we’d better not be so quick to judge—maybe God has a hand in it like He did here.

Verse 4: “‘I must work the works of Him Who sent Me while it is still day. When *the* night comes, no one is able to work. As long as I am in the world, I am *the* light of the world.’ After saying these things, He spat *on the* ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to the eyes of the blind man. And He said to him, ‘Go *and* wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which is, by interpretation, “Sent”). Then he went and washed, and came *from there* seeing” (vs 4-7).

What was the man’s attitude? *The man’s attitude was thankfulness and gratefulness!* God made him blind from birth for this very miracle. Isn’t that something? That’s why God doesn’t have us running around hospitals telling people to get out

of the wheelchair, get out of the iron-lung and all this sort of thing, because all that would be would be nothing but vanity and stupidity on our part to do so.

There are some that have to go through suffering that way, and it's a shame that it has to be. God is going to take care of them.

Let's look at those who suffer who know better! So, in either case we have to endure regardless of what it is; we have to endure.

(go to the next track)

These things are good examples to the intent that we should lust after evil things as they also lusted. Here then is an example of when we get into difficulty, sometimes we suffer for our sins; sometimes we suffer because others have sinned—and then we will see the final result of all this.

1-Corinthians 10:6: “Now these things became examples for us, so that we might not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.’ Neither should we commit sexual immorality, as some of them committed, and twenty-three thousand were destroyed in one day. Neither should we tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted *Him*, and were killed by serpents. Neither *should we* complain against *God*, as some of them also complained, and were killed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them *as* examples, and were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages are coming. Therefore, let the one who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall” (vs 6-12).

This is the whole key, v 13: “No temptation... [no trial, no difficulty, no temptation that you're going through] ...has come upon you except what is common to mankind...” That's so we don't get the big ‘picked on’: Why is God doing this to me? Why is God doing that to me? *We just need to look to God and ask Him to help us!*

“...For God, Who *is* faithful, will not permit you to be tempted beyond what you are able *to bear*; but with the temptation, He will make a way of escape, so that you may be able to bear *it*” (vs 13-14).

That's why we're to be patient and have endurance. To endure means to bear up under. God will provide the way. Sometimes we don't even see it. And He'll do it in a way that's different than what we may think.

James 5:11: “...You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the end result of *serving the* Lord: that the Lord is very compassionate and full of tender mercies.” And God is “...full of tender mercies”! That's why when

we're in these difficulties, we need to throw ourselves on the mercies of God.

Let's see where it talks about God's compassion and comfort and so forth in relationship to us, 2-Corinthians 1:3: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and *the* God of all comfort.”

I'll guarantee you one thing, sometimes you'll come to a point in your life where suffering is going to seem like you can't endure another minute of it—whether it is mental, physical, an illness or disease. Regardless of the circumstances, you come to the point where you can't take it anymore! We all get there! I've gotten to that point and maybe you've gotten to that point. That's when we need to go to God and say, ‘God, You're the God of all comfort!’ You finally realize in your own misery you can't save yourself. In your own misery you can't change your circumstances—only God can!

Verse 4: “Who comforts us in all our tribulation... [trials and difficulties] (why?): ...in order that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trial...”

That's one of the things of living that we go through, so that we can turn around and help others who are in trouble. When we're going through it, sometimes we don't see it that way. I didn't! You didn't! But that's the whole lesson, so that when we finally get the comfort—which comes from God—then we're able to do the same thing and say to others:

Look, trust in God, wait in His way, cry out to God and ask Him to help you. That's the time you go to God and say:

- I don't know anything
- I don't know what to do
- I can't solve this problem
- I don't know how to handle it
- It is more than I can bear
- I can't stand whatever it is
- I just completely throw my life on Your hands
- I just throw my life before Your very throne,
- that's just the way it is, God.
- I just don't know
- just help me, please

***That's when God can do more to help you than at any other time.*** Why? Because

- the vanity's gone
- the self-righteousness is gone
- your own plans are gone
- your own solution is worthless
- your own life is encompassed with your own difficulties and problems and sins and

everything

You just come to God and say, 'Ah, God, I need Your grace, I need Your help, I need Your mercy!' You can be guaranteed that somewhere along the line someone is going to come to you in the same circumstances and you're going to be able to help them. And you can help them in confidence because you've gone through it.

Verse 5, Paul says: "For to the degree *that* the sufferings of Christ abound in us..." None of us have had the sufferings of Christ abounding in us like the Apostle Paul. I call your attention to the sermons: *So, You Think **You** have Suffered!*

"...so also our comfort abounds through Christ." ***God is going to comfort us! God is going to help us!*** In some cases, the true consolation will come at the resurrection! That's when it will come. Do we have to endure till the resurrection? We have to endure to death! Then the resurrection after that!

Verse 6: "And if we are in distress... [notice how Paul looked at his afflictions] ...*it is* for your comfort and salvation, which is being worked out by *your* enduring the same sufferings that we also suffer; *and* if we are comforted, *it is* for your comfort and salvation (and our hope *is* steadfast for you); knowing that as you are partners in the sufferings, *you are also partners* in the comfort" (vs 6-7).

***That gives us a lot of hope! In the suffering that we go through there is a lot of hope!***

It's interesting that James has this right here at this particular point, because when we get to the point of suffering, what is that you want to end immediately? *The pain! The suffering! The agony!* What is that most people will say? *I will do anything to get rid of this or that or the other thing!* Some people, at the point of extreme, have given up on God because of their suffering.

I read an account where these 40 Christians who were asked to deny Christ and to offer sacrifices to one of the Roman gods, and Licinius, the emperor at the time, said, 'If you don't do it, I'm going to torture you.' So they didn't do and 40 of them were cast out into a freezing lake in the middle of the winter.

They were told, 'If you denounce Christ, you can come in and get warm and be fed.' So, 39 of them stayed out there in the freezing water. One of them recanted, went in to get warm, but between the warm water to warm him up and the heat of the room, he died anyway! Then, one of the soldiers who was administering this took off his clothes and ran out there and joined the other 39 and said, 'I am a Christian also.' He froze to death with them.

That's why James is saying here, James 5:12: "But above all things, my brethren, do not swear, neither *by* heaven, nor *by* the earth, nor *by* any other oath... [when you are under pressure, when you are legally put into a situation] ...but let your yes be yes, and *let* your no *be* no, so that you do not fall into hypocrisy." If you do fall into hypocrisy, God can forgive you for that. Can God forgive you for your hypocrisies? *Yes!*

1. Matt. 5:33-37—Jesus said, 'Swear not at all...'
2. Matt. 23:16-22

Verse 13: "Is anyone suffering hardship among you? Let him pray..." That's why difficulties come. Look if everything went just fine, if everything were perfect:

- Would you pray every day?
- Would you study every day?
- How many times when you're suffering you don't pray?

You walk around in your misery, so miserable that you don't pray.

"...Is anyone happy? Let him sing praise. Is anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him after anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord... [that's for our healing] ...And the prayer of faith shall save the sick one..." (vs 13-15). Has to be your faith, minister's faith and the very faith of Christ altogether!

"...and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (v 15). This shows that sickness is the result of some kind of the breaking of some law, which is sin somewhere, whether your fault or not.

Sometimes you just shake the someone who has the flu, and then inadvertently you rub your nose with your hand and you've got the flu. That virus is on their hand because they just blew their nose and it goes from their hand to your hand, from your hand to your nose and right up your nose into your system. They've discovered that's how many flu and cold things are passed around. So, if you do happen to becoming down with a cold and you're in church, don't feel as though you have shake hands with anyone. Just tell them, 'I may becoming down with the flu,' but don't shake hands.

One other little tip—just for a family thing concerning sickness and flu and so forth: If someone has distresses of the bowels, don't all of the people in the family use the same commode. Let the one who is sick use one commode. Make sure it's cleaned and cleaned, because the virus can be in the water and

with the flushing, the mist comes up and settles on various parts of the commode and the next one who sits down then gets the virus. Just a little precautionary. That way then you're not going to have things come upon you that you didn't expect.

Needless to say, there are some sins that you do and bring upon you, for which anointing and praying for you will forgive those. There are some things that come upon you that you have nothing to do with, except you just happen to be there. Those also will be forgiven.

Verse 16: "Confess *your* faults to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed...." This is really quite a close situation, quite a mature responsibility, that you can understand a person's faults and mistakes without talking about them and condemning them. Isn't that the first thing that people like to do: 'Have you heard...' Shows quite a mature level of Christianity here.

"...*The* supplication... [fervent prayer] ... of a righteous man prevails much, being effective" (v 16). This has the meaning of a specific prayer, a specific request. That's what anointing is.

Verse 17: "Elijah was a man of emotions like ours, and he prayed earnestly *that it* would not rain, and it did not rain upon the earth *for* three years and six months. And again he prayed, and the heaven gave rain, and caused the earth to sprout its fruit" (vs 17-18).

I love that story. When Ahab is summoned up there and Elijah prayed the last time and behold there was a little cloud coming on the horizon. He said, 'Ahab, you better get in your chariot and you'd better head back to the palace, now! Because if you don't, the flood is going to wash you away!' Then after that the rain came and what did Elijah do? He was so afraid of Jezebel he went down and hid in a cave in Mt. Horeb. Had the same emotions that we have. Even though he was able to do these things and these great miracles, he was still subject to human weakness.

After he prayed that it not rain, what happened? He went down by a brook for a while, then a raven fed him the bread and the flesh morning and night! Then the brook dried up and God said to go over to the widow in Sidon and stay there with her. Elijah stayed there almost a full three years. That tells you what a great office that his was. It was a great office, but he didn't make much of it, and God didn't make much of it. Stayed with a widow for three years. Of course, you know the miracle of the flour and oil and the healing of her son. There's quite a bit we can learn from the story of Elijah and everything that he did.

Verse 19: "Brethren, if anyone among you strays from the Truth, and someone brings him back, let him know that he who brings back a sinner from *the* error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins" (vs 19-20).

That's the end of the book of James. No 'Amen.' I think that I mentioned why there is no 'Amen' on it, that it may have accompanied the book of Hebrews as an introductory letter. But needless to say, ***the whole book of James has so many different lessons for us!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) James 4:13-17
- 2) Luke 22:41-42
- 3) Colossians 3:17
- 4) Ephesians 5:17
- 5) James 4:16
- 6) Proverbs 20:14, 17
- 7) Proverbs 21:6-7
- 8) James 4:16-17
- 9) 2 Peter 2:18-22
- 10) James 4:17
- 11) Romans 14:10-13, 23
- 12) James 5:1-5
- 13) Luke 16:19-26
- 14) James 5:6-11
- 15) John 9:1-7
- 16) 1 Corinthians 10:6-14
- 17) James 5:11
- 18) 2 Corinthians 1:3-7
- 19) James 5:12-20

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Daniel 4
- Genesis 3
- Revelation 18
- James 1
- Isaiah 2
- Revelation 6:12-14; 20
- Isaiah 55:8-11
- John 15:1-7
- Revelation 14
- Matthew 5:33-37; 23:16-22

#### Also referenced: Sermon Series:

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