

## JAMES

### Chapter 1 Bible Study

#### Background on James

**Author:** James, the son of Joseph and Mary, and half-brother to Jesus, also known as “James the Just” (and not James the Apostle). James was known to be the leader of the Jerusalem Church. **Note:** James and Jesus had other brothers (Joseph, Simon, and Jude-Author of Jude) and sisters too – Matt 13:55-56 (sisters are unnamed). James was stoned to death in A.D. 62.

**Date Written:** About A.D. 47-49. **Note:** This book was written after the stoning of Stephen (A.D. 35), which is when the persecution began where believers scattered.

**Audience:** Jewish believers scattered abroad (because of the persecution). **Note:** When persecution is little, believers can stay together, when persecution increases believers have to scatter, which is often the best way to spread the Gospel.

**Setting:** James probably wrote this epistle in Jerusalem. **Note:** Jerusalem is and was the home town of Christianity. It’s the capital of Israel, it’s where the Church started, it’s where Jesus was crucified, it’s where He arose and ascended into heaven. It’s where the Apostles ministered, it’s where the Holy Spirit filled the first believers, and it’s where the Church started having explosive growth.

**Something to think about:** Could you imagine what it was like to be “The brother of Jesus”? Your older brother is a guy who makes no mistakes, and is literally the perfect person, in “word” and in “deed”. **Note:** At first James did not believe that his brother was the Messiah (**John 5:** For even His brothers did not believe Him). But later James becomes one of the main leaders in the Church. Scholars believe that James must have had a change of heart after Jesus died, because James is listed as one of the people that Jesus appears to, after his death, in A.D. 30 or 33.

**Purpose for writing James:** To teach believers how to put their “Faith into Action”!

James 1

#### Greetings from James

<sup>1</sup>This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am writing to the “twelve tribes”—Jewish believers scattered abroad.

Greetings!

## Faith and Endurance

<sup>2</sup> Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. <sup>3</sup> For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. <sup>4</sup> So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

1. Who wrote the book of James, and who did he write it to? (V1) \_\_\_\_\_

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**NOTE:** *Even though New Testament writings listed specific audiences directly, God wrote the Bible, through His people, and “to His People”. So the book of James and other Biblical writings are written to all people in all times (present and future).*

2. What attitude did James say that we should have, when troubles in life come our way? (V2) \_\_\_\_\_

3. When troubles in life come our way, our faith is tested. What two benefits come from having our faith in God tested? (V3,4) \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>5</sup> If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. <sup>6</sup> But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. <sup>8</sup> Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.

4. If you need wisdom in life, who should you ask? (V5) \_\_\_\_\_

5. When you ask God for wisdom, as you are dealing with troubles in life, who alone should you put your faith in? (V6) \_\_\_\_\_

6. James talked about people who put their faith in God **AND** in something else. What was the other thing that people put their faith in? (V8) \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** *When the bible refers to the “world”, it means “the morally corrupt system in place in this world that is opposed to God, and ruled by Satan”. The world was put in three categories by John the Apostle (through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) ...*

**1) The lust (strong desire) for physical pleasure.** *This refers mostly to the lust for sex apart from marriage, but also refers to any sort of selfish or greedy cravings simply to satisfy one’s physical desires. 2) The lust for things we see.* *The NLT Study Bible calls this “bowing to the god of materialism”. This area of the world has to do*

*with the sins of “craving and accumulating” possessions. **3) Pride in our achievements and possessions.** This refers to the inward (meaning in the heart) and the outward boasting based upon one’s status or the possessions they own.*

7. When a person divides his/her loyalty between God, and the desires of the world, what should they expect to get from God? (V6-8) \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>9</sup> Believers who are poor have something to boast about, for God has honored them. <sup>10</sup> And those who are rich should boast that God has humbled them. They will fade away like a little flower in the field. <sup>11</sup> The hot sun rises and the grass withers; the little flower droops and falls, and its beauty fades away. In the same way, the rich will fade away with all of their achievements.

8. One difference between a poor person and a rich person is that a poor person has to trust God to meet their needs, while a rich person just buys what they need. What did James compare a rich person to? (V10) \_\_\_\_\_

9. In what way did James say the rich are like a flower? (V11) \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>12</sup> God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. <sup>13</sup> And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, “God is tempting me.” God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. <sup>14</sup> Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. <sup>15</sup> These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

10. What two benefits do we receive as a result of “enduring testing and temptation”, as we go through life? (V12) \_\_\_\_\_

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11. Does God ever tempt us to do the wrong thing? (V13) \_\_\_\_\_

12. Where does temptation come from? (V14) \_\_\_\_\_

13. What happens if we give in to temptation, instead of turning to God for help? (V15) \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>16</sup> So don’t be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup> Whatever is good and perfect comes down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. <sup>18</sup> He chose to give birth to

us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.

14. Where does everything good come from? (V17) \_\_\_\_\_  
15. Does God ever change, like people do? (V17) \_\_\_\_\_  
16. Out of all that God created, what is His most prized possession? (V18) \_\_\_\_\_

### Listening and Doing

<sup>19</sup> Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. <sup>20</sup> Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. <sup>21</sup> So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.

17. How does the Bible say we should act toward others? (3 things from V19)

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18. Being angry and allowing ourselves to give into the temptation to sin is something that God wants us to get rid of. What else did God say to get rid of? (V21) \_\_\_\_\_

19. What has the power to save our souls, and who can share it? (V21) \_\_\_\_\_
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<sup>22</sup> But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup> You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. <sup>25</sup> But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

20. In James 1:22 you will find one of the most important principles in scripture. What is it? (V22) \_\_\_\_\_

21. What will happen if you do what the Bible says **AND** don't forget what is written in it? (V25) \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>26</sup> If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. <sup>27</sup> Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

22. How valuable is a person's religion, if they can't even control their tongue?  
(V26) \_\_\_\_\_

23. What two characteristics are found in religion that is pure and genuine? (V27)

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**Reflection/Application:** What is the one thing that really stood out to you, and how can you apply it to your life? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Prayer Guide:** Based upon the first part of the Lord's Prayer (*Our Father in heaven, may Your name be kept holy*), honor God by telling Him how wonderful He is ... God You Are wonderful, loving, forgiving, \_\_\_\_\_ (Praise Him)

**Answer Key**

1. James was written by James, and he wrote it to the 12 tribes of Israel.
2. We should have joy.
3. Our endurance grows, and when our endurance grows we will be perfect and complete.
4. You should ask God for wisdom.
5. You should put your faith in God alone.
6. The World.
7. Nothing.
8. A flower in the field.
9. They will both eventually fade away.
10. God blesses us, and we will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those that love Him.
11. No.
12. From our own evil desires, which entice us and drag us away.
13. Evil desires give birth to sinful actions, and then sin grows and gives birth to death.
14. God our Father.
15. No, God never changes.
16. Us, People.
17. We should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.
18. Get rid of all filth and evil in your lives.
19. God's Word has the power to save our soul, and we can share it with others.
20. Don't just listen to the Bible, do what it says.
21. God will bless you.
22. Their religion is useless.
23. Caring for orphans and widows in their distress, and refusing to let the world corrupt you.