Notes

on

JAMES

Windell Gann's e-Sword Bible Notes

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JAMES

Introduction

1. The Need:

James is one of the most practical books of the New Testament and one needed by Christians of every generation. Its stinging rebukes of worldliness and pretense in religion are urgent ones for our time. Its denunciations of social injustice have caused many to label James the "Amos of the New Testament."

The epistle of James appeals from start to finish for Christians to make their lives consistent with their profession.

There is an amazing similarity between this epistle and the Sermon on the Mount:

1) Joy in the midst of trials (James 1:2; cf. Matthew 5:10-12)
2) Boldness in prayer (James 1:5; cf. Matthew 7:7-12)
3) The danger of a bad temper (James 1:19-20; cf. Matthew 5:22)
4) Hearing and doing (James 1:22; cf. Matthew 7:24-27)

And many other parallel points. The practical wisdom of this book impresses all who bother to study it closely.

2. The Author:

There several men in the New Testament who bear the name "James." (Matthew 4:21; Matthew 10:3; Luke 6:16; Mark 6:3). By a process of elimination the most reasonable possibility for authorship of this letter is James the brother of Jesus.

He was the James who played the most prominent role in the early history of the church. This would make him the brother of another New Testament writer, Jude (Jude 1:1, Matthew 13:55).

Neither James nor Jude were sympathetic to Jesus' claim during the Lord's personal ministry (John 7:3-5). Jesus appeared to James after His resurrection and all doubts and reservations were removed (1 Corinthians 15:7; Acts 1:14). He is mentioned a number of times in the book of Acts and Paul referred to him as one of the "pillars" of the church at Jerusalem (Galatians 2:9).

In his letter James humbly only identifies himself only as "a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ" (James 1:1).

3. The Background:

The letter is addressed to Jewish Christians who had been scattered from Palestine by persecution (James 1:1). This dispersion had come about because of attacks from unbelieving Jews (Acts 8:1 ff about AD 33, and Acts 12:1 about AD 41).

This book was probably the first of all the New Testament book to have been written, probably about AD 45. (Therefore the controversy over receiving Gentiles into the church had not yet become an issue.)

James knew of the severe trials these saints were having to endure for their faith (James 1:2). He wrote to encourage them in their difficulties and warn them against spiritual laxity and neglect of their duties.

4. The Theme: Daily practice of true religion.
A key verse seems to be James 1:22.

5. An Outline:

I. True religion in a time of trial -- James 1:1-18

1. After a brief salutation (James 1:1), James immediately urges a positive attitude toward his reader's trials (James 1:2-4). Such difficulties should be faced with prayer James 1:5-8) and with a consciousness of life's true value (James 1:9-11), God blesses those who endure (James 1:12).

2. When temptation comes, it is not from God (James 1:13) but arises from our own lusts (James 1:14). Yielding to temptations ends in death (James 1:15-16), but God only gives good gifts (James 1:17-18).

II. How our faith is tested in this world -- James 1:19-5:18
The faith of Christians is tested in various ways:

-- its reactions to the word of God (James James 1:19-27)
-- its relations to one's fellowmen (James 2:1-13)
-- its right actions (James 2:14-26)
-- its control of the tongue (James James 3:1-18)
-- its avoidance of worldliness and strife (James 4:1-12)
-- its acknowledgement of God's will in all one's plans (4:13-17)
-- its reaction to oppression (James 5:1-12)
-- its dependence on prayer (James 5:13-18)

III. On restoring the erring -- James 5:19-20
Although the letter is designed to promote endurance, it encourages the faithful to help bring back any who should err from the faith (James 5:19-20).

Conclusion:
! This lovely letter reads very much like a sermon.
! It has tones of compassionate authority which James would use with people dear to him who were facing extreme difficulties.
! It is eminently practical in showing Christians how faith is to be lived in the total arena of life.

6. Major Points in the book of James:

1. Hearing and doing -- James 1:22-25
The truth of the gospel must be translated into concrete deeds and actions of faith. "Hearing" the Word of God is the right point of beginning; we must guard against the notion that

contemplating the good is same as being good! (Romans 2:13). One who is content to hear without doing is "deceiving" himself.

2. Living by the "royal law" -- 2:8-13

Loving one's neighbor as himself is a central commandment of true religion. In the O.T. (Leviticus 1:1; cf. Mark 12:29-31); in the N.T. (Galatians 5:14; Romans 13:8-10).

All of the strong statements in this letter about social justice are based on this law. Love for one's neighbors requires compassion for widows and orphans (James 1:27). It forbids partiality (James 2:1-7), it prohibits slander (James 4:11-12), and it rebukes exploitation of the poor (James 5:1-6).

3. The relationship of faith and works -- James James 2:14-26

James' thesis is that faith without works is dead (2:14-17). Remember what Jesus said about validating a claim to faith, Matthew 7:21. Christianity must produce practical results in order to be counted genuine. What we believe, must have a bearing upon how we behave.

Next James challenges the naive assertion that some men may demonstrate their religion by faith and others by works (James 2:18-20). There is no proof that one has faith at all apart from the fruit that faith produces in his daily life. James challenges anyone to show his faith apart from his deeds.

The epistle shows how true faith is exemplified (2:21-26). Abraham demonstrated his faith in offering up his son Isaac (Genesis 22:1-19; Hebrews 11:17-19). Rahab proved her faith in the God of the Hebrews by hiding the spies in her house (Joshua 2:1-24; Hebrews 11:31).

Our confusion over the relationship between faith and works may be traced to the fact that "**works"** can be taken to mean different things:

(1) the works of the Law of Moses (cf. Romans 3:28)
(2) works of human merit (cf. Ephesians 2:9)
(3) actions of response to the divine will (cf. John 6:29; James 2:14-26).

No man can be saved by works of the Law of Moses or works of human merit; but no man can be saved without an obedient response to heaven's commands.

SERMON OUTLINE

Let Us Pray

James 5:13-20

Introduction:

The book of James has a great deal to say about the use of the tongue: complaining (James 5:9); and swearing (James 5:12). But he also named some of the highest uses of the tongue: proclaiming God's Word (James 5:10); and praying and praising God (James 5:13).

Seven times in this section James mentions prayer and encourages us to pray by describing five situations in which God answers prayer

.

1. PRAY FOR THE SUFFERING (James 5:13)

The word afflicted means "suffering in difficult circumstances." James tells us what we should do when we find ourselves in such trying circumstances.

Such prayer of the faithful will either remove the affliction, or enable the child of God to bear it.

2. PRAY FOR THE SICK (James 5:14-16)

Some seem to think that this teaches that full physical health is always just a prayer away. Others relate this process outlines by James as invoking God ("pray over him") and using medicine ("anoint him with oil") -- prayer plus a physician.

A brief explanation and background will be considered here.

3. PRAY FOR THE SINFUL (James 5:16)

This verse points out our spiritual concern for one another. The healing in this verse is spiritual healing, a healing of the souls (Matthew 13:15; Hebrews 12:13; 1 Peter 2:24).

4. PRAY FOR THE STATE (OR STATESMEN) **5:16b-18**

As an indication of the power of prayer James refers to a story of the time of Ahab King of Israel (1 Kings 17-18). We are exhorted to pray for our rulers (1 Timothy 2:1-3).

5. PRAY FOR THE STRAYING (5:19-20)

While James does not specifically name prayer in these verses, the implication is there. If we pray for the suffering, the sick, we must pray for the brother who wanders from the truth. (Not that he may be saved in his sin, but that he will turn from those sins.)

"Seeking the Lost" is a common Bible picture of soul-winning. Jesus pictured the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost boy in Luke 15. In seeking the lost and straying we must manifest the right attitude (Galatians 6:1 "the spirit of meekness").

CONCLUSION:

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Author:

1) Apostle - Matthew 4:21; sons of Zebedee and Salome, Acts 12:2

2) James the less (the little, smaller, younger) Alphaeus & Mary - Matthew 10:3 (some think possibly a brother of Matthew, cf. Mark 2:14.)

3) James - brother of Jesus, Matthew 13:55
- not a believer - John 7:5
- After resurrection Jesus appeared to 1 Corinthians 15:7.
- If James is personally responsible for the letter, it likely dates to the late 40s AD, around the time of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15), and no later than AD 62, when James was martyred in Jerusalem.
- Both Paul and Luke indicate that James became a leader in the church in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 9:5; 1 Corinthians 15:7; Galatians 1:15 - Galatians 2:12 ff; Acts 12:17; Acts 15:13; Acts 21:18)
- See Utley for a very full discussion of the various "James" etc.

Good source material:
Guy N. Wood's Gospel Advocate Commentary series.
Good outline in BKC, and in WW "Be Mature."
See WHG ASV 8x1 looseleaf notes.

Key thought: Belief determines behavior.

Verse Comments:

James 1:1

James 1:1 James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.

servant .. The term "*servant*," better slave, as one who had been bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20, 1 Corinthians 7:23), was used by both Peter (2 Peter 1:1) and Paul (Romans 1:15 Titus 1:1). The '*servant* of the Lord Jesus,' is an appellation which is often given to Christians, and particularly to the ministers of religion.

Lord Jesus Christ .. Same form used by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem in their epistle to the Gentiles Acts 15:26.

twelve tribes .. Addressing Jewish Christians; perhaps an illusion to refer to the full church, Jewish and Gentile, as the true Israel.

Scattered (dispersion) .. Acts 8:4 This word occurs only here and in 1 Peter 1:1, and John 7:35. See Barnes about the two great dispersions of the Jews, East (under the Assyrians and Babylonians) and West (under Alexander the Great to Egypt, Asia Minor, and Greek and Roman cities.).

Greetings .. Compare the salutation in Acts 15:23, which was also probably written by St. James: "The apostles and the elder brethren unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia, greeting." (1) Χαίρειν *Chairein* is common to both, and not found elsewhere in apostolic greeting.

÷Jas_1:2
James 1:2

James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

My brethren .. written to Christians. A favorite expression with James and occurs no less than fifteen times in this short epistle.

count it all joy ... 1 Peter 1:6; Gk *chara*. Regard it as a matter in which to rejoice. It is not to be considered as a punishment, but as being fit of felicitation.

all .. "All" is placed first in the Greek text for emphasis. In James the trials are not joy, but their possible results are (cf. Matthew 5:10-12; Luke 6:22-23: Acts 5:41; Romans 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:16; 1 Peter 1:6).

fall .. encounter, face, comes your way, come upon you. The tense (Aor. Act. Sub.) speaks of possible future actions, but with some degree of doubt.

These believers were experiencing some problems but apparently not all of them. Trials and problems are common for believers in this fallen world (cf. 1 Peter 4:12-16; Romans 8:17; Philippians 1:29; 2 Timothy 3:12).

various trials .. various kinds of trial which they might experience; sickness, poverty, bereavement, persecution, etc.

The Greek word here, *peirasmos*, refers to an unwelcome or unexpected experience. James may be referring to trials in general, or to specific hardships such as persecution (James 2:6-7; James 4:3, James 4:13), sickness (James 1:1), and poverty (vv. James 1:9-11; James 2:1-7; James 5:1-6).

trials .. "tests" that challenge faith.

:Jas_1:3
James 1:3

James 1:3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

knowing .. When you consider how God works for your benefit, not for you destruction.

testing .. "proving" As Jesus was "tested" in the wilderness. The Greek *dokimion* ("testing") denotes a positive test intended to make one's faith "genuine" (cf. 1 Peter 1:7).

patience .. (endurance, perseverance, steadfastness) .. Expresses a growing determination in the face of adversity, based on hope. Those who suffer can express joy (v. 2) during times of trial because of their confidence in the day in which Christ will vindicate them (1 Peter 4:13).

:Jas_1:4
James 1:4

James 1:4 But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

patience .. (see definition in previous verse).

But let patience .. This is a PRESENT ACTIVE IMPERATIVE. Of the 108 verses in the book of James there are 54 IMPERATIVES. It is a book of exhortation to practical living. - Utley

have its perfect work .. its perfect results.

Perfect .. mature and complete. The Greek word "perfect" (*telos*) means "fully equipped," "mature," or "ripe." It is often linked to love (cf. Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 13:9-13; 1 John 4:18).

It seems to have the connotation of a mature faith which issues in faithful, loving service. It does not imply or suggest "sinlessness" or "without fear."

It is just possible that this could have an eschatological reference. James often looks toward the culmination of the Christian hope (cf. James 1:8-9, James 1:12; James 5:7-8).

lacking nothing .. A mature Christian is described in three ways:
(1) perfect (*telos*);
(2) with integrity or complete (*holokleros* cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:23); and
(3) lacking in nothing (NJB "not deficient in any way").

Trials are God's means of producing maturity (cf. Hebrews 5:8-9). Maturity is not theological insight only, but daily faithful endurance! Maturity is who we are, not what we know! Its fruit is seen and developed in crisis.

:Jas_1:5
James 1:5

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

If .. This is a FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE which means it is assumed to be true from the author's perspective or for his literary purposes.

any of you .. Notice the universal offer of wisdom "if any of you…." God's wisdom is available to His

children, but they must sense the need, ask, and receive. Wisdom, like maturity, is not automatic.

lacks .. There is a wordplay between vs 4 and vs 5. It is captures in the NASB translations "...lacking in nothing. But if any of you lacks wisdom." This theme is continued in James 3:13-18.

wisdom .. Refers to the knowledge and understanding of God's plans and purposes and the ability to live accordingly.

James' Jewish audience recognized this as the understanding and practical skill that was necessary to live life to God's glory. It was not a wisdom of philosophical speculation, but the wisdom contained in the pure and peaceable absolutes of God's will revealed in His Word (cf. James 3:13, James 3:17) and lived out.

In the OT wisdom/knowledge represents two aspects: (1) intellectual and (2) practical (cf. Proverbs 1:1-6). In this context it is the practical, daily insight from God that sustains His persecuted people.

let him ask .. That is, for the specific wisdom which he needs; the very wisdom which is necessary for him in the particular case. It is proper to bear the very case before God; to make mention of the specific want; to ask of God to guide us in the very matter where we feel so much embarrassment. It is one of the privileges of Christians, that they may not only go to God and ask him for that general wisdom which is needful for them in life, but that whenever a particular emergency arises. - Barnes

let him ask ... Pres. Act.Imperative, = "let him continue to ask of God".

God, who gives .. The thought is that God gives absolutely all good gifts to those that ask Him (Matthew 6:11), and wisdom is one of the highest gifts that God can give man is included in the promise (Luke 11:13).

who give to all ... who ask!

liberally and without reproach .. The object of the writer was to encourage those who felt their need of wisdom, to go and ask it of God; and there is no thought that God gives such wisdom to all men whether they ask it or not!

liberally ... generously. This form of the term *haplos* is found only here in the NT. Its root form (*haplotes*) came to be used metaphorically of sincerity, genuineness, or purity of motive (cf. Romans 12:8; 2 Corinthians 1:12; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 6:5; Colossians 3:22) or liberality (cf. 2 Corinthians 8:2; 2 Corinthians 9:11; 2 Corinthians 9:13). James uses it here to describe God's free gift of wisdom to those who ask and continue to ask in faith. God, then, is the opposite of the doubting man.

without reproach .. God doesn't want anyone to hesitate to come to Him in prayer. God is not a harsh, stingy disciplinarian! He is like a loving parent who wants the best for His children.

The word implies a contrast with human givers who give and afterwards mar their gift with bitter and reproachful speeches. There seems here a direct allusion to the description in Ecclus. Sirach 20:15, of "the gift of a fool," "He giveth little and upbraideth much," NRSV.

and it shall be given him ... An obvious echo of our Lord's promise in Matthew 7:7; Luke 11:9

:Jas_1:6
James 1:6

James 1:6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

ask in faith .. i.e. trust in God, as distinct from from belief in a dogma. A settled trust and confidence in God based on His character and promises as revealed in Scripture Hebrews 11:1.

We cannot hope to obtain any favour from God if there is not faith, Hebrews 11:6.

with no doubting .. No hesitating, no doubting, no vacillation of the mind. We come to God with the utmost

confidence and assurance.

wave .. surge of the sea; Isaiah 57:20 The wave of the sea has no stability! It is at the mercy of every wind, and seems to be driven and tossed every way. So he that comes to God with unsettled convictions and hopes, is liable to be driven about by every new feeling that may spring up in his mind.

:Jas_1:7
James 1:7

James 1:7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

let not that man ... A person who doubts God's goodness dishonors him.

:Jas_1:8
James 1:8

James 1:8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

double-minded man .. Literally "two-souled" cf James 4:8.
This term is unique to James in the NT and in Greek literature. Many believe James coined it. It probably comes from the OT's "double-heart" (cf. 1 Chronicles 12:33; Psalms 12:2). It was used early and often by the early church - Utley

double minded .. Describes someone who tries to live two contradictory lifestyles, or trying to serve two masters, God and the world, Matthew 6:24; Proverbs 11:3

unstable .. a possible reference back to v.6 and a wind tossed wave. It is possible that v. 6 deals with a doubting person and vv. 7–8 deal with a double-minded person.

in all his ways .. There is a slight change of imagery from the wave of v.6 , and the picture presented in v.8 is that of a man who does not walk straight onward, but in "all his ways" goes to and fro, now toward this side, now toward the other, staggering, like a drunken man.

:Jas_1:9
James 1:9

James 1:9 Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,

lowly brother .. humble circumstances; the community that James addresses might have been facing conditions of poverty, James 2:1-7; Hebrews 10:32-35.
Poverty may be one of the "trials" of which James speaks.
This refers to physical poverty (cf. Luke 6:20), although this same term is used by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount for the "spiritually poor" (cf. Matthew 5:3).

Putting v. 9 and 10 together we see that poor Christians and wealthy ones can rejoice that they both have the privilege of being identified with Christ.

glory in his exhalation .. something to boast about .. In the NT boasting is usually viewed negatively (James 3:14; James 4:16; Ephesians 2:9), but here it means boasting about what God had done (James 2:5; Romans 15:18; 1 Corinthians 1:31; Galatians 6:14).
This usage of **glory** (*kauchaomai*) can be seen in the Septuagint of Psalms 32:11 and in the NT in Philippians 3:3. This is a strong Greek term and should be translated "exult" (cf. Romans 5:2, Romans 5:3, Romans 5:11).

high position .. the spiritual "exaltation" they enjoy in Christ, James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:6 This refers to one's personal exaltation at being a Christian. In light of this, worldly distinctions and trials fade into insignificance.

:Jas_1:10
James 1:10

James 1:10 but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.

Point: But let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate [i.e. his Christian dignity]; but let the rich [brother glory] in his humiliation" (i.e. in being poor of spirit, Matthew 5:3).

the rich .. It seems grammatically that both the lowly and rich are to be considered "brothers", i.e. Christians.

Some view this "**rich**" man as a non-Christians whose **humiliation** is because he has no *riches* in Christ and faces the dreadful fate of the ungodly rich who elevate themselves by oppressing the poor and vulnerable people (James 2:6-8; James 5:1-6).

However, it does appear that there were both rich and poor are included in those James addresses.

like a flower of the grass .. This imagery comes from Isaiah 40:6-7 (compare Psalms 37:2; Job 15:30-33). He likens their destruction to the grass, which withers in the heat.

:Jas_1:11
James 1:11

James 1:11 For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

sun risen .. This imagery comes from Isaiah 40:6-7 (cf Psalms 37:2; Psalms 103:15-16; Job 14:2; Job 15:30-33)

burning heat .. (with a scorching wind) .. This refers to the desert Sirocco winds. Job 27:21; Ezekiel 17:10

grass .. flower falls .. A picture of Palestine's flowers and flowering grasses, which colorfully flourish in Feb. and dry up by May. This is a clear allusion to Isaiah 40:6-8, which speaks of the scorching sirocco wind that burns and destroys plants in its path.

This picture from nature illustrates how divinely wrought death and judgment can quickly end the wealthy person's dependence on material possessions (cf. Proverbs 27:24).

A literal rendering: *For she sun arose with the scorching wind, and withered the grass; and the flower thereof fell away, and the grace of the fashion of it perished.* (Winer, Grammar of New Testament Greek)

rich man .. fade away .. 1 Peter 1:24; showing that the "***riches***" of this world will not last into eternity, even if one is a Christian; or if the rich man is a not a believer it indicates ultimate judgment.

* Utley at this point has a great Special Topic: Wealth.

:Jas_1:12
James 1:12

James 1:12 Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will

receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

A return to the theme at the beginning of the chapter.

Blessed .. true happiness; Echos of Matthew 5:4; Matthew 5:10; Matthew 5:11.
This reflects Hebrew usage (cf. Psalms 1:1; Proverbs 3:13; Proverbs 8:34; Job 5:17; Isaiah 56:2; Jeremiah 17:7). This can be translated "happy" (cf. TEV, NET). This is the same term used in "the Beatitudes" of the Sermon on the Mount (cf. Matthew 5:1–17).

Blessed is the person who endures testing .. In this context, "blessed" describes an attitude of determined courage that is unaffected by external circumstances. Job 5:17; Psalms 1:1; Psalms 32:2; Proverbs 8:32,

temptation .. trials.

approved .. Lit. "passed the test". The believer has successfully and victorious gone through his trials, indicating he is genuine because his faith has endured lie Job's.

crown .. The wreath placed on the head of a victorious athlete or military leader, 1 Corinthians 9:25; 2 Timothy 4:8.

crown of life .. The crown that consists of eternal life, Revelation 2:10.
The genitive here indicates "the crown, which is life."
Revelation 2:10, the only other place in the New Testament where the "*crown of life*" is mentioned; and there also it stands in close connection with the endurance of temptation. Elsewhere we read of the "*crown of righteousness*" (2 Timothy 4:8), and the "*crown of glory*" (1 Peter 5:4).

Those who love him .. are faithful and obedient (cp. James 1:22-25; James 2:5; Deuteronomy 7:9; 1 John 5:2).

÷Jas_1:13
James 1:13

James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

do not say .. James is using diatribe, in which an imaginary opponent presents a contrary opinion. In this way he is able to voice the readers' possible objection and immediately refute it (also in James 2:3, James 2:16, James 2:18; James 4:13).
This is a PRESENT ACTIVE IMPERATIVE with the NEGATIVE PARTICLE which usually means "stop saying." The implication is that some believers were saying this. This reflects the literary technique called diatribe. - Utley

Let no one say .. James cautions Christians against interpreting their temptations to sins put there before them to entice them (lure them) to do wrong, but James makes clear in the following verses that men alone are responsible of choosing to sin.
God brings trials (tests) into his people's lives (e.g., Genesis 22), but he never desires that believers fall to temptation.
God brings trials in order to strengthen the Christian's faith. He never tempts, however, because he never desires his people to sin. Christians should never blame God when they do wrong.

God cannot be tempted .. Because he is perfectly holy, God has nothing in his nature that is open to evil. By becoming fully human, Jesus was capable of being tempted (Matthew 4:1-11), but he never yielded to that temptation (Hebrews 4:15).
God by His holy nature has no capacity for evil, or vulnerability to it (Habakkuk 1:13; cf. Leviticus

19:2; Isaiah 6:3; 1 Peter 1:16).

does not tempt anyone .. This statement seems to be caught up in the differing connotations between the terms "tempt" (*peirazo*, cf. James 1:13), and "test" (*dokimazo*, cf. James 1:3, James 1:12). God does not tempt so as to destroy, but He does test so as to strengthen.

God is not the source of evil! Please See RSVA Ecclesiasticus Sirach 15:11, Sirach 15:15; Sirach 15:20. RSVA

nor .. tempt anyone .. Remember when Jesus was in the wilderness it was Satan that tempted him, not the Father. Some have said that the Lord gets blamed for much of the Devil's work.

God purposes trials to occur, and in them He allows temptation [Satan's work] to happen, but He has promised not to allow more than believers can endure and never without a way to escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). They choose whether to take the escape God provides or to give in, NOTICE: cf. 2 Samuel 24:1; 1 Chronicles 21:1. Similar to the way that God hardened Pharaoh's heart Exodus 9:12, and Exodus 9:34 Pharaoh hardened his own heart. (God presented the situation, but Pharaoh was responsible for his own actions.)

÷Jas_1:14

James 1:14

James 1:14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

enticed - The Greek word *deleazō* describes drawing in an unsuspecting victim with an attractive bait or lure. Like bated hooks for fishing or traps for hunting.

when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.. **(NASB)** These two verbs were used of trapping and luring animals into captivity.

We tend to blame others for our sin. We may blame God, the devil, parents, society, education, etc. We are own worst enemy. The Bible speaks of three enemies of humanity: the world, the flesh, and the devil (cfJas 4:1-7; Ephesians 2:1-3). In this context, "the flesh," or our Adamic nature, is the culprit (cf. Ecclesiasticus Sirach 15:14-15 RSVA).

Notice that Satan is not even mentioned in this section on human sinfulness. Neither is he mentioned in Paul's section in Romans on human sin (cf. chapters 1–3). Satan is a real tempter, but he cannot force humans to sin and is, therefore, no excuse for their moral failures. - Utley

his own .. describes the individual nature of lust - it is different for each person as a result of his own tendencies, environment, upbringing, and personal choices. Matthew 15:18-20. 1 Peter 5:8-9

÷Jas_1:15

James 1:15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

when it has conceived .. The pictures changes from capturing animals to a "birth/grown" metaphor used here in a negative sense while in James 1:18 it is used in a positive sense.

gives birth to sin .. James uses the analogy of human conception and birth to describe sin. Desire is conceived when a person yields to temptation, which results in the "birth" of sin. As sin matures, this ultimately leads to God's judgment of death.

With this analogy, James asserts that God's judgment against sin is the result of people's own choices. All sin ultimately originates in individuals, not in any other source. According to James, desire (the negative, destructive kind) is the source of temptation, which explains the presence of sin and death in

the world (compare Romans 7:17-23; Galatians 5:16-21; Ephesians 2:3). FSB

÷Jas_1:16
James 1:16

James 1:16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

Do not be deceived .. The Greek expression refers to erring, going astray, or wandering. Christians are not to make the mistake of blaming God rather than themselves for their sin. MSB
The same formula is found in 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Corinthians 15:33; Galatians 6:7.

÷Jas_1:17
James 1:17

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

James 1:17-27 88-Ho "Are You Kidding"

every good and perfect gift is from above .. These words have a poetic cadence in Greek. They are literally, "every good act of giving (dosis) and every perfect gift (dorema) is from above." BKC

every good gift .. James moves from evil temptations (which God never gives) to good things which God does give. Matthew 7:11; James 1:5

gift .. gift .. Two different Gk words for "**gift**" emphasize the inclusiveness of God's graciousness. The first denotes the act of giving, the second is the object given. MSB
The Bible does list some of the things God has given us: (1) Jesus (John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 9:15); (2) the Spirit (Luke 11:13); (3) the Kingdom (Luke 12:32); (4) salvation (John 1:12; Ephesians 2:8); (5) eternal life (1 John 5:11); (6) peace (John 14:27); and (7) wisdom (James 1:5).- Utley

coming down .. The Bible is written in the language of description using the five senses. It is earth-centered or focused. This language is a literary way of expressing the priority of God's ultimate creation, mankind. The Bible is not a science book, but a theology book. Utley

from above .. namely heaven, descending from the **Father of lights**, which refers to God as creator of the heavenly lights (Genesis 1:14-18; Psalms 74:16; Psalms 136:7-9; Jeremiah 31:35) a prime example of his good gifts.

no variation .. God is unchanging in his character and therefore his giving of good, unlike the **variation** of the night changing to day or the shifting **shadow** caused by the sun or moon. ESVSB

÷Jas_1:18
James 1:18

James 1:18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

James 1:18-26 How Faith Shows Itself
1. Reception of the Word
2. Response to the Word
3. Resignation to the Word

his .. His, meaning "the Father" v. 17; God is pictured taking the initiative.

us .. meaning the believers to which James writes.

brought us forth .. This is a common biblical familial metaphor for salvation as becoming God's children through birth (cf. James 1:12-13; John 3:3; Acts 17:29; Hebrews 12:5-9; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 2:29; 1 John 5:1; 1 John 5:4).

This phrase could refer to the initial creation of Adam and Eve in Genesis. If this is true then it could explain the difficulty of James 1:21 where believers are to welcome the word that is already implanted in them. [Ecclesiastes 3:11] This then would refer to the image of God in humans by creation (cf. Genesis 1:26; Genesis 5:1; Genesis 5:3; Genesis 9:6) and its full restoration through faith in Jesus Christ. - Utley.

However, in context this seems to refer to becoming a Christian because the agency is the **word of truth** which implies that salvation is only through the gospel, not creation.

Part of the interpretive ambiguity is the fact that the term "father" is used in several distinct ways in the Bible: (1) creator of all things; (2) begetter and sustainer of Israel (and Israel's king); (3) begetter and sustainer of spiritual Israel (the church); and (4) relationship within the Trinity (Father-Son). - Utley

Brought us forth by the word of truth .. speaks of spiritual salvation, with "us" meaning believers, the "word of truth" being the gospel, and "brought … forth" (that is, from the womb) being a metaphor for the new birth. The firstfruits of the harvest (cf. Exodus 23:16-19; Leviticus 23:9-14) are pioneer believers, who are a prelude to further conversions yet to come (cf. Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:15). - ESVSB

word of truth .. In Ephesians 1:13; Colossians 1:5; and 2 Timothy 2:15 it is synonymous with "the gospel."

first fruits of his creatures .. This means first: (1) in the sense of time as in the OT where the first-ripened part of the crop was dedicated to YHWH to show His ownership of all the crops (cf. Exodus 28:19; Exodus 34:22; Exodus 34:26; Leviticus 23:10) and (2) metaphorically first in priority and prominence. - Utley

The Greek word translated "first fruits" (*aparche*) refers to what is first in honor as well as to what is first in order. The biblical writers used it "of persons superior in excellence to others of the same class." - Constable.

÷Jas_1:19

James 1:19

James 1:19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

James echoes the wisdom of Proverbs on avoiding hasty speech and unrighteous anger, Proverbs 10:19; Proverbs 13:3; Proverbs 16:32; Proverbs 17:28; Proverbs 29:20.

beloved brethren .. James 1:2; and James 1:9 James drives home his concerned loving message.

let every man .. Imperative

swift to hear .. slow to speak ..

His injunction may have particular application and refer to the informality and unstructured dynamic nature of the worship services of the early church (cf. James 3:1 ff). This openness was often abused. This same tension among rival singers, tongue speakers, and prophets can be seen in 1 Corinthians 14. - Utley

slow to wrath [become angry] .. It as been notice that never is the ear more firmly closed than when anger takes over.

Anger is not a sin (lest Jesus be accused of sin in the cleansing of the Temple or His harsh words to the Pharisees), but it is an emotion easily used by the evil one (cf. Proverbs 14:17; Proverbs 16:32; Ecclesiastes 7:9).

The Greek word ὀργήν· "anger" in this context may by implication refer to (1) persecutions, trials, temptations or (2) personal pride or jealousy related to Christian worship (cf. 1 Corinthians 14).

÷Jas_1:20
James 1:20

James 1:20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Point: When one gets maliciously angry it does not produce anything good.

wrath of man .. An angry response to temptations does not advance the righteousness in character and conduct that God is seeking to produce in the believer. - Constable

righteousness of God .. the justice of God NLTSB; behavior that pleases God, NIVZSB; man's malicious angry/wrath doesn't produce righteousness, justice, or holiness that God wants to develop in man's character, it is not "God like".

"Righteousness" here is .. closer to the usage of the OT (Isaiah 61:3) and Jesus (Matthew 3:15; Matthew 5:6; Matthew 5:10; Matthew 5:20; Matthew 6:1; Matthew 6:33; Matthew 21:32), in the sense of conducting one's life by the will of God, according to his standards. ESVSB

÷Jas_1:21
James 1:21

James 1:21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

lay aside .. The removal of clothing is often used as a biblical metaphor for spiritual characteristics (cf. Romans 13:12; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:22-25; Colossians 3:8, Colossians 3:10; Colossians 3:12; Colossians 3:14; 1 Peter 2:1). Dirty clothing is an OT metaphor which is often used for "sin" (cf. Isaiah 64:6; Zechariah 3:4). - Utley

filthiness .. It is essential to put away, or remove, all moral filth (*ryparian*, used only here in the NT; cf. *rypara*, "shabby," in James 2:2) and all the abundance of evil, BKC

overflow of wickedness .. the "remains of wickedness" are those habits that may carry over from a previous sinful life before conversion; "excessive: vile character that is more like the Devil and not God's.

receive with meekness .. with humility, gentleness.

Engrafted word .. the Word compared to seed implanted in the heart (RSV, etc,, cf Jesus' parable of the sower.)

"Planted" (*emphyton*, used only here in the NT) contrasts with grafted. The Word is to be rooted in the fertile soil of the soul. It is that Word of God which can save, Romans 1:16.

James describes the gospel as a seed that is planted in the heart (Jeremiah 31:33).

James' wording in the "laying aside" and "receiving" indicate the voluntary nature of man's response to the gospel.

able to save .. refers to the ultimate salvation of man on the last day, but perhaps also indicates that this manner of life (holiness, righteousness) is a quality that adds "abundant living" now.

your souls .. "Souls" here refer to the whole nature of man, physically and spiritually James 5:20; Genesis 2:7; 1 Peter 3:20.

÷Jas_1:22
James 1:22

James 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

doers of the word .. The fact that James calls professing believers to be "doers," rather than simply *to do*, emphasizes that their entire personality should be characterized in that way. MSB

James' audience would have probably heard this message in the context of public worship (Revelation 1:3).

In several places, James appears to be reflecting on Jesus' teachings. These verses reflect the teaching of Jesus (Matthew 7:24; Matthew 7:26; Luke 6:46; Luke 6:49). - New Living Translation Study Bible.

"The call to 'do what it says' lies at the center of all that James teaches. It sums up the message of the whole book: Put into practice what you profess to believe. Indeed, James 1:22 may well be the key verse of James's epistle.". - Burdick, p.175.

not hearers only .. This word was used in Greek literature for those who attended lectures but never joined the groups. Hearing the truth is not enough; believers must act on it and continue to act on it daily (cf. Luke 11:28; Romans 2:13). - Utley

deceiving yourselves ..
This word παραλογιζόμενοι was used in mathematics to refer to a miscalculation. Professing Christians who are content with only hearing the Word have made a serious spiritual miscalculation. - MSB
The deception comes from thinking they have done all that is necessary when actually listening to the Word is only the beginning. - BKC

NOTE: In these two verse (James 1:21-22) we see the essence of salvation - 1) repentance "lay aside" 2) faith, receive the word; 3) obedience to the word - by becoming "doers of the word." WG

:Jas_1:23
James 1:23

James 1:23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;

if .. 1st class conditional sentence assumed to be true from author's perspective or for his literary purposes.

hearer of the word .. Hearing is good, but obedience must follow.

observing .. A Gk word (*katanoeo)* meaning to look carefully and cautiously, as opposed to taking a casual glance.

natural face .. "face of birth"

mirror .. Ancient mirrors were made of polished metal. They were very expensive and produced only a distorted reflection (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:12). God's word functions as a spiritual mirror reflecting a true perfect image.

:Jas_1:24
James 1:24

James 1:24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

he .. It is interesting that James cited a man (*andri*) in this illustration. A woman would probably

not give just a cursory glance, and if she saw a flaw she would probably do what she could to cover it or correct it. Not so this man who sees the "face of his birth" (*prosopon tes geneseos*) and then forgets about it. - BKC

James uses this analogy to illustrate that those who hear the message without acting on it are like those who, after observing themselves, leave and forget what they look like. - FSB

Three mistakes we make when we look into a mirror.
1. we only glance
2. we look and forget
3. we look and do nothing

Three reason for looking into a mirror
1. for examination
2. for restorations (Ezekiel 37-38 Ezekiel 37:4 John 15:3
3. for transformation - Romans 12:1-2

1. Receive the word - v. 21 James 1:21
2. Live the word - v. 22 James 1:22
3. Share the word -
HOW
  1) speak - v.26 James 1:26
  2) service - v.27 James 1:27
  3) being separate - v. 27b

:Jas_1:25
James 1:25

James 1:25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it,* and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

perfect law of liberty .. the law that sets one free; the gospel is perfect in freeing one from sin, John 8:32. John 8:3-36

Here "law" is equivalent to "the word" in James 1:18; James 1:21-22

This phrase is parallel to "the royal law" in James 2:8 and "the law of liberty" in James 2:12 (also, notice John 8:23; Romans 8:2; Romans 14:1 ff; 1 Corinthians 8:1 ff; 1 Corinthians 10:23-33; Galatians 6:2). - Utley

The law to which James referred is the revelation of God's will contained in Scripture (cf. Matthew 5:17). It is perfect because it is the perfect will of a perfect God. - Constable

liberty .. The "Law that gives freedom" seems like a paradox. Law seems to imply restraint and therefore a lack of freedom. Not so with God's Law. His perfect Law provides true freedom. BKC

Though the OT law was "holy and righteous and good" (Romans 7:12), it had no power by itself to enable sinful people to conform to it. Thus, the OT law did not liberate God's people but enslaved them, as Paul taught (Galatians 3:10–4:7; cf. Romans 2:1–3:20; Romans 5:20; Romans 6:14-15; Romans 7:1-25). ESVSB

continues .. It is possible to be enslaved by sin again after being set free if one does not continue in the word. Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:9; Galatians 5:1

blessed .. Note James' agreement with Paul that Christians live in comparative liberty under the "law of Christ" (Galatians 5:1; Galatians 6:2; cf. Matthew 11:30). Obedient adherence to the Word of God is the key

to experiencing God's **blessing** in life now as well as in the eschatological future. - Constable

:Jas_1:26
James 1:26

James 1:26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* useless.

if .. condition assumed to be true.
Verses 25–26 are not a reference to religious hypocrites, but to sincere, unfulfilled, uninformed, unfruitful religionists.

religious .. This refers to ceremonial public worship θρησκὸς (cf. Acts 26:5). This term is used only here in the NT. In particular, it refers to the outward appearances of one's religious practices. - Constable.
James chose this term, instead of one referring to internal godliness, to emphasize the external trappings, rituals, routines, and forms that were not followed sincerely. - MSB

The term "religious" means "one concerned with scrupulous details." James envisions (1) legalistic believers who trust in rules or (2) gnostic believers who trust in knowledge, neither of whom live godly lives. - Utley

bridle his tongue .. "Bridle" means "control", or as another translation renders it, "keep a tight rein."
Human speech is a major issue in James (cf. James 1:19; James 3:2-12: Matthew 15:8-9; Colossians 2:20-23; 2 Timothy 3:5). Self-control is a sign of Christian maturity (cf. Galatians 5:22-23).

deceive his own heart ..

religion is useless .. vain .. worthless .. futile .. This is an empty show (cf. Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:8-9; Colossians 2:23; 2 Timothy 3:5; James 1:19; James 3:2-12). Religion can be a barrier to God (cf. Romans 9:30-32).

:Jas_1:27
James 1:27

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

pure .. clean ..

undefiled .. faultless ..

pure and undefiled religion .. James picks two synonymous adjectives to define the most spotless kind of religious faith—that which is measured by compassionate love (cf. John 13:35).

to visit .. look after (NIV) .. care for (NET) .. This expresses true religion in terms of service, as do Deuteronomy and Matthew 25:31-46. Also, see Micah 6:6-8 for a definition of true religion.

fatherless (orphans) and widows .. Orphans and widows were particularly vulnerable in ancient times (Deuteronomy 14:29; Ezekiel 22:7; Acts 6:1-6).
They were dependent upon the care of others, since the husband and father was the means of economic support and social contact (Exodus 22:22-24; Deuteronomy 10:18). Christians are called to take care of the helpless (cp. 1 Timothy 5:3-16)

affliction .. trouble .. distress .. Taking care of orphans and widows is a duty that lies close to the heart of God (cf. Exodus 22:21; Deuteronomy 10:18; Isaiah 1:17; Jeremiah 5:28; Ezekiel 22:7; Zechariah 8:10). Yet many who professed to love Him neglected it (Psalms 68:5; Ecclesiastes 4:10; Mark 12:40). - Constable

unspotted .. unstained .. from being polluted ..

Likewise personal moral purity is an excellent external indicator of godliness (cf. Acts 15:20; 1 Timothy 5:22). -Constable

James uses the sacrificial language of "the lamb without blemish" (Exodus 12:5; 1 Peter 1:19) to describe the pure religious person.

from the world .. Remember that as believers we are in the world, not of the world (cf. James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17); lack of involvement and heavy involvement are both inappropriate.

÷Jas_2:1
James 2:1

James 2:1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with partiality.

Ch. 2
1. accept others - 2:1-13
2. Assist others - 2:14-26

do not hold .. This is a PRESENT ACTIVE IMPERATIVE with a NEGATIVE PARTICLE which means to stop an act that is already in process. The Williams translation has "stop trying to maintain …" This implies that the people acting this way were misguided believers. - Utley
The implication is that the church was already engaged in this practice.

the faith .. This refers not to the act of believing, but to the entire Christian faith (Jude 1:3).

with partiality .. favoritism; Matthew 22:16;
There is no place for prejudice in the life of faith. "Partiality" combines a group of terms signifying "to accept/judge according to face" and refers to favoritism shown on the basis of status in society.- ESVSB

It may be helpful to distinguish partiality or favoritism (Gk. *prosopolepsia*; Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; cf. Acts 10:34) from some of its synonyms. One definition of *prosopolepsia* is as follows.
It is "the fault of one who when called on to requite or to give judgment has respect to the outward circumstances of men and not to their intrinsic merits, and so prefers, as the more worthy, one who is rich, high-born, or powerful, to another who is destitute of such gifts." - Constable

Lord of glory .. James implicitly compares the glory that belongs to Christ alone with the "glory" that believers are giving to powerful, wealthy humans. - NIVZSB
This is a title for deity in the Bible (cf. Psalms 29:1-3; Acts 7:2; 1 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 1:17).
The rabbis used the term "Shekinah glory" to speak of YHWH dwelling with Israel (cf. Exodus 16:10; 2 Chronicles 7:1-3). Here the phrase describes Jesus (cf. Luke 2:32; John 1:14; John 17:5; 1 Corinthians 2:8; Hebrews 1:3). Notice that Jesus is called (1) Messiah (Christ in Greek); (2) Lord (Greek translation of YHWH using the meaning of the substituted term Adonai); and (3) "of glory" (unique title for YHWH). These titles are a literary technique of attributing the divine characteristics of YHWH to Jesus of Nazareth. - Utley

÷Jas_2:2
James 2:2

James 2:2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes,

gold rings .. fine apparel .. of the rich, in contrast to the filthy clothes of the poor, symbolize the contrast in socioeconomic status.

gold rings .. While Jews commonly wore rings (cf. Luke 15:22), few could afford gold ones. However, there are some reports that in the ancient world the most ostentatious people wore rings on every finger but the middle one to show off their economic status (some ancient sources indicate that there were even ring rental businesses). - MSB

fine apparel .. This word refers to bright, shining garments and is used of the gorgeous garment Herod's soldiers put on Jesus to mock him (Luke 23:11) and of the apparel of an angel (Acts 10:30). It can also refer

to bright, flashy color and to brilliant, glittering, sparkling ornamentation. James is not condemning this unbeliever for his distracting dress, but the church's flattering reaction to it.- MSB

**comes into your assembly .. (your meeting).. ** Literally, *your synagogue*. Illustrates partiality shown within their community.

Since James was writing early in the church's history to Jewish believers (James 1:1), he used both this general word and the normal Gk. word for "church" (James 5:14) to describe the church's corporate meetings during that period of transition. - MSB

The use of the term *synagogue* reflects an early date for the book. NIVZSB

filthy clothes .. (shabby) The word shabby (*rypara*, "dirty" or "vile") is found only here and in Revelation 22:11. (Cf. the word *ryparian*, "moral filth," which James used in James 1:21.) - BKC

This may refer to one not only in poverty, but a beggar, the cultural opposite of the finely dressed man.

:-Jas_2:3
James 2:3

James 2:3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool,"

Some think James remarks here refer to a time when Christians and Jews wee still worshipping together, or evidence that the early Jewish Christans' worship services were patterned after a synagogue structure. The presence of "seats of honor" and "footstool" in the Jewish synagogue (cf Matthew 23:6) seem to indicate this.

Others think the assembly described is not a worship setting but a Christian court similiar to those held in the synagogue (cf. Mark 13:9; Luke 21:12.) The two visitors (litigants) may be part of a legal proceeding. They may explain (1) why they do not know where to sit and 92) the reference to "drag you into court" in James 2:6 (cf. Leviticus 19:15).

pay attention .. (give special attention) .. (lit., "to gaze upon") and preferential seating is given to the rich man, and standing room only or an inferior seat on the floor (lit., "under my footstool") is afforded the poor man. - BKC

To give special attention to wealthy people because of their social status, political power, and potential generosity as patrons is wrong.

By serving and publicly honoring the wealthy, the church could gain whatever economic benefits they wished to give. James warns that ***this discrimination*** reflects ***evil motives***, a division between loyalty to God (James 1:6) and a desire for the benefits of worldly wealth (James 4:4). - NLTSB

sit in a good place ..

A more comfortable, prominent place of honor. The synagogues and assembly halls of the first century sometimes had benches around the outside wall and a couple of benches in front. Most of the congregation either sat cross-legged on the floor or stood. There were a limited number of good seats; they were the ones the Pharisees always wanted (Mark 12:38-39). - MSB

stand there .. probabl in the back

sit at my footstool .. like a srvant.

:-Jas_2:4
James 2:4

James 2:4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

There is some debate among the commentators about whether a public worship service or a congregational meeting for the purpose of hearing a judicial case is in view. 86 The term "synagogue" meant a public worship service in early Christian literature, but the following verses may suggest a judicial setting. This issue does not affect the meaning of the passage significantly. - Constable

have you not .. Verses 4 and 5 are questions which expect a "yes" answer.

made distinctions .. (NASB) Believers were and are guilty of showing distinctions and favoritism. "Distinctions" is a compound word of *dia* (through) with *krina* (judge).- Utley

The OT prohibits people from discriminating between the rich and the poor (Leviticus 19:15); the practice also goes against God's character (Deuteronomy 10:17; Job 34:19). - FSB

shown partiality .. NKJV The true sin in this passage, not the lavish apparel or rings of the rich man or that he was given a good seat.

judges with evil thoughts .. This is better translated "judges with vicious intentions." James feared that his readers would behave just like the sinful world by catering to the rich and prominent while shunning the poor and common. - MSB

Christians are not to "judge" each other (Matthew 7:1-5; Romans 14:4; 1 Corinthians 5:12), and to do so can only mean one's mind is consumed with evil "thoughts" (Gk. *dialogismos*, which can mean "opinions," "reasoning," or "conclusions"). - ESVSB

:Jas_2:5
James 2:5

James 2:5 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* **rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?**

Listen .. (Listen to me, Harken) .. Employing this rhetorical device for emphasis (see Deuteronomy 6:3; Amos 3:1; Matthew 13:18; Acts 15:13), - NLTSB

Aorist Active Imperative - which expresses urgency. - Utley

Has God not chosen .. "Chosen" is an Aorist Middle Indicative (cf. Ephesians 1:4) We get the English word "elect" from this Greek term. - Utley

poor of this world .. James does not mean that the rich are at a disadvantage when it comes to believing, but that the **poor** are more apt to rely on God... FSB

God's special concern for the poor is reflected in the OT (Exodus 23:11; 1 Samuel 2:8; Psalms 12:5) and in the ministries of Jesus and Paul (Luke 4:18; Luke 6:20; 1 Corinthians 1:26-28). This concern was emphasized by the Jerusalem church (Galatians 2:9-10), of which James was the leader. - NLTSB

Those who appear **poor** materially, but are **rich** spiritually .. BKC

The irony is that God has chosen to bless the poor and socially ostracized. God has chosen them and made them rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, but the local worship leaders were favoring the wealthy and powerful. These were the very ones who were persecuting the early believers. The gospel being preached to the poor was a sign of the New Age (cf. Isaiah 61:1 ff; Matthew 11:5; Luke 1:51-53; Luke 4:18; Luke 7:22). - Utley

The poor have always felt ostracized from "official" religion, but they were wonderfully accepted and embraced by Jesus. The poor gladly accepted Christ, while the rich tended to trust in their own resources (cf. Matthew 19:23-26). This is not to imply that every poor person is saved, but they surely are welcome to come to Jesus. Most of the early church were from the poorer classes of society. - Utley

rich in faith .. James indicates that the poor are wealthy in terms of their salvation and its associated blessings, not in terms of material goods. - FSB

They are **rich** in an eternal sense because they are **heirs of the kingdom** (cf. "poor in spirit, … theirs is the kingdom of heaven," Matthew 5:3). - ESVSB

heirs .. The Scriptures talk about believers inheriting many things because of their relationship with Jesus who is heir of all things (cf. Hebrews 1:2), and they as coheirs (cf. Romans 8:17; Galatians 4:7) of (1) the kingdom (cf. Matthew 25:34, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 1 Corinthians 15:50); (2) eternal life (cf. Matthew 19:29); (3) God's promises (cf. Hebrews 6:12); and (4) God's protection of His promises (cf. 1 Peter 1:4; 1 Peter 5:9). - Utley

heirs of the kingdom .. Being an heir of the kingdom means possessing eternal life (Mark 10:17-23; Luke 18:29-30) and salvation (Luke 18:18-26). Matthew 3:2; Matthew 4:17 -FSB

The Kingdom of God was central to the teaching of Jesus (Matthew 12:8; Mark 1:15; Luke 17:21). Christ already rules from his place at the right hand of the Father, yet his Kingdom will be fully realized only when the Son of Man comes (Matthew 25:31; Matthew 25:34; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28). - NLTSB

Here James means the kingdom in its present sense of the sphere of salvation—those over whom Christ rules .. MSB

He promised .. Matthew 16:28;

Jas_2:6

James 2:6

James 2:6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts?

It is uncertain whether the rich referred to in James 1:10-11; James 2:6 or James 5:1-6 are believers. Possibly they were wealthy Jews, the very ones who persecuted the early Christians. - Utley

But you .. An emphatic contrast to what God has done for the poor, powerless, and ostracized of v. 5.

dishonored .. Even thought God chose the poor, the church has treated them with disrespect. - FSB

the poor man .. When a Christian dishonors the poor he or she treats them exactly opposite to the way God treats them (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:22; 1 Peter 2:17). - Constable

the rich oppress .. The rich are characterized as (1) oppressing you; (2) dragging you to court; and (3) blaspheming the name by which you are called. Can these be wealthy believers? I think not! - Utley

Instead of favoring Christians James reminded his readers that the characteristic response of the rich to them had been to oppress them (cf. Acts 4:1-3; Acts 13:50; Acts 16:19; Acts 19:23-41). How inconsistent it is to despise one's friends and honor one's foes! The oppression in view could have been physical and or legal. - Constable

Rich unbelievers are using their power and influence to persecute believers, probably because they oppose the teaching about Jesus as Messiah and Lord. - NIVZSB

oppress .. Lit. "to tyrannize" MSB

drag you into courts .. The wealthy apparently were applying legal pressure to the poor, perhaps regarding wages, rent, and other forms of debt. - FSB

As frequently recorded in the OT (e.g., Amos 4:1; Habakkuk 1:4; Malachi 3:5), the wealthy often used the court system to steal from the poor. This situation was the primary reason for the revolts in Galilee that led to the war of A.D. 66–70. ESVSB

:Jas_2:7
James 2:7

James 2:7 **Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?**

blaspheme .. speak evil of, TEV; insult, NJB, scorn, MSG; speak against, NCV; slandering, NIV
James accuses the wealthy of insulting or slandering the name of Christ - FSB
Probably a reference to religious courts. Wealthy Jewish opponents of Christ were harassing these poor Christians. Cf. John 16:2-4. MSB
To blaspheme or slander (Gk. *blasphemeo*) means to mock deliberately or to speak contemptuously of God. Perhaps those who were blaspheming Christ's name were unbelieving Jews (cf. Acts 13:45). - Constable

noble name .. honorable name, ESV; worthy name, KJV; good name; LEB; fair name, NASB;
The rich not only typically oppose Christians, they also typically speak against Christ. This was true in James' world as it is in ours. It is inconsistent to give special honor to those who despise the Lord whom believers love and serve. - Constable

by which you are called .. (to whom you belong, LEB, him to whom you belong, NIV; invoked over you, RSVA)
Literally "*which was called upon you*"**;** A similar expression is found in St. James's speech in Acts 15:17, in a quotation from Amos 9:12. - PC
The use of this word indicates alway that it is God who does "calling", or who gave the name; cf. Acts 11:26. Isaiah 62:2.

There is an allusion either to the fact that they were already called Christians, or that they were baptized in his name. Acts 11:26, PNT

Culturally this could refer to (1) a patriarchal family blessing (cf. Genesis 48:16); (2) a wife taking her husband's name (cf. Isaiah 4:1); (3) a slave becoming a permanent property of another; (4) a baptismal formula (cf. Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38); (5) an Old Testament title for the covenantal people of God (cf. Deuteronomy 28:10; 2 Chronicles 6:33, 2 Chronicles 7:14); or (6) the title "Christian" (little Christs), first given in derision to believers at Antioch of Syria (cf. Acts 11:26). In context #4 fits best. - Utley

(Literally *slander the noble name spoken over you*): The name spoken over you is Jesus Christ (James 2:1). It is a sign of ownership, pronounced at the time of conversion and baptism. - NLTSB

name .. Judaism often spoke of "the sacred name" or used other expressions rather than using the name of God; James may apply this divine title to Jesus here (cf. James 2:1). In the Old Testament, being "called by someone's name" meant that one belonged to that person in some sense; it was especially applied to belonging to God. - IVPBBCNT

:Jas_2:8
James 2:8

James 2:8 **If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you do well;**

If .. Conditional sentence assumed to be true. James' hearers/readers were fulfilling the royal law if they loved appropriately. - Utley

It was written in Greek in such a way that an obedient response was anticipated. - BKC

really fulfill .. Christians are to ***obey*** (literally *fulfill*) the royal law, just as Jesus fulfilled the law by his

coming (Matthew 5:17) and his teaching (Matthew 22:34-40). - NLTSB

the royal law .. (Gk. *basilikos*), i.e., "law belonging to the king," with reference here to God's law in Leviticus 19:18 ("love your neighbor"; cf. Matthew 22:34-40) as the apex of kingdom rules for ethical conduct. Cf. Romans 13:8-10. - ESVSB

The law is royal or regal (*basilikon*, from *basileus*, "king") because it is decreed by the King of kings, is fit for a king, and is considered the king of laws. The phrase reflects the Latin *lex regia* known throughout the Roman Empire. - BKC

according to the Scripture .. This is a quote from Leviticus 19:18, but with an eye toward Leviticus 19:15 (i.e. you shall not be partial) also.

love your neighbor .. James quotes Leviticus 19:18. Jesus cites this in Matthew 22:39 as the second-greatest commandment (see Matthew 7:12).FBS

This law had received the sanction of the King himself (Matthew 22:39; Luke 10:25-26). - PC

This quotation from Leviticus 19:18 requires identifying with the neighbor as though the neighbor were yourself. - NLTSB

Quoted from Leviticus 19:18, and when combined with the command to love God (Deuteronomy 6:4-5), summarizes all the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 22:36-40; Romans 13:8-10). - MSB

you do well .. "you are doing well" NASB; "you are doing right" NIV; You are not to be blamed but to be commended. MPCNT

÷Jas_2:9

James 2:9

James 2:9 but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

But if .. Better translated as "since," the Gk. construction of this conditional statement indicates that this practice was in fact happening among James' readers. - MSB

show partitality .. The type of preferential treatment James dealt with in this pericope (James 2:1-13) violates the royal law because it treats some as inferior and others as sources of special favor (cf. Acts 10:34). - Consable

Contrasts obedience to the royal law; showing partiality [against a neighbor] is opposed to loving one's neighbor—it is an act of sin. - FSB

Showing favoritism violates the command to love one's neighbor (James 2:8). - NLTSB

This is a strong word for the church today. We dare not play favorites with those for whom Christ died (cf. Romans 14:15; Romans 14:20; 1 John 2:9-11; 1 John 3:9-18). - Utley

committing sin .. "Sin" is in an emphatic position in the Greek sentence. - Utley

convicted by the law .. James personifies the law as a judge pronouncing a guilty verdict on the accused for breaking it. It is unclear whether James refers here to the royal law or the OT law, but based on his next phrase—and it being steeped in a Jewish context—it seems that he is referring to the OT law. - FSB

as transgressors .. Transgression means to "step over a known boundary" and was one of the OT definitions of sin. Notice this is not ignorance, but willful action against God's revealed will. - Utley

This refers to one who goes beyond the law of God. Respect of persons makes one a violator of God's law. - MSB

÷Jas_2:10
James 2:10

James 2:10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one ***point,*** **he is guilty of all.**

For whoever shall keep .. The best manuscripts [à B, C. - old, but which are not necessarily the best, - WG] read, "Whosoever *shall have kept* the whole law, and yet shall have offended (literally, 'stumbled'; not so strong as 'fall,' Romans 11:11) in one (point; here, t*he respecting of person*s), is (hereby) become guilty of all." The law is one seamless garment which is rent if you but rend a part; - JFB

the whole law .. The law was considered an interdependent whole, and any infraction constituted a breaking of the law as a whole. Jesus said, "not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished" (Matthew 5:18). Thus favoritism (James 2:9) makes one "accountable" (Gk. *enochos*, a legal term for "liable" or "guilty" before God's court) for the whole law. - ESVSB

The Law was express on the need of keeping all the commandments; see Leviticus 19:37 (the same chapter to which St. James has already referred). - PC

stumble in one *point* **..** Partial obedience, or temporary obedience, was never enough to be accepted by God through the Mosaic covenant (cf. Matthew 5:19; Galatians 5:3). This type of summary statement about keeping the whole law (from *bar mitzvah* [boys from age 13] and *bath mitzvah* [girls from age 12] now responsible to keep the law) is the theological basis of Paul's strong statements of mankind's sinfulness in Romans 3:9-23. - Utley

is guilty of all .. (**accountable for all** - ESV) ..
Reflects the belief that the OT law was to be kept in its entirety (Galatians 5:3) - FSB

Not in the sense of having violated every command, but in the sense of having violated the law's unity. One transgression makes fulfilling the law's most basic commands—to love God perfectly and to love one's neighbor as oneself—impossible. - MSB

"Our obedience to God's will cannot be on a selective basis; we cannot choose that part that is to our liking and disregard the rest. God's will is not fragmentary; the entire law is the expression of His will for His people; it constitutes a grand unity. To break out one corner of a window pane is to become guilty of breaking the whole pane. He who crosses a forbidden boundary at one point or another is guilty of having crossed the boundary. - 94{ Hiebert, James, p. 148} - Constable

A golden chain whose completeness is broken if you break one link [GATAKER]. ... If any part of a man be leprous, the whole man is judged to be a leper. - JFB

÷Jas_2:11
James 2:11

James 2:11 For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

James uses this comment in **verse 11** to illustrate his point in verse 10. One doesn't have to break ***every*** law to become a law-breaker, just ***one*** law!

He who said .. Refers to God, who spoke these commands (Exodus 20:13-14). - FSB (Deuteronomy 5:17-

18)

adultery .. murder .. This is the order of the Ten Commandments (which shows James' early Jewish flavor) in the Septuagint, which was the Greek translation of the OT begun about 250 B.C. and is quoted by most NT authors. - Utley

This appears to have been the usual order at that time. Our Lord quotes them in this order in Luke 18:20, and Paul in Romans 13:9. Philo also has the same order. - PC

a transgressor of the law .. a violator of law, a law-breaker;
James illustrated this point with a hypothetical case involving two very severe violations of the law. All sins are not equally serious in that the consequences of some sins are greater than others, but all sins are equally serious in that any sin is a violation of God's will. - Constable

÷Jas_2:12
James 2:12

James 2:12 So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.

So speak .. do .. One must both habitually speak and act (Gk. present active imperative) remembering that we will stand before God in judgment. Matthew 12:37.
Perhaps this is referring back to James 1:19; James 1:26, and fuller discussed in James 3:5-12.

Believers' words and lives must agree. We must practice what we preach (cf. Matthew 7) - Utley

Complete and consistent obedience is required if spiritual maturity is to be attained. The believer is commanded to accept his brother with courtesy, compassion, and consistency. - BKC

judged by .. Believers must speak and act in accordance with the law of liberty and with a view to the coming judgment. - ESVSB
Everyone will stand before God in judgment, Matthew 25:31; Romans 2:6; Romans 2:16; 2 Corinthians 5:10.

the law of liberty .. (see note on James 1:25)
The law of liberty (James 1:25) is the law of God that liberates us now. It is the same as the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2) in contrast to the Mosaic Law. As free as we are under the law of Christ, we need to remember that God will judge us (Romans 14:10-13; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10). We need to speak and act accordingly, namely, without prejudice toward others. - Constable

÷Jas_2:13
James 2:13

James 2:13 For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

judgment without mercy ..
Believers' words and lives must agree. We must practice what we preach (cf. Matthew 7)
James might be drawing on ideas from Zechariah 7:9-10, where mercy is closely related to concern for the poor. - FSB

who has shown no mercy ... (not practiced mercy; not had pity;)
This proverbial saying sums up the implications of vv. 1–12 and leads into the "faith without works" discussion in vv. 14–26. It was the core of Roman law (*lex talionis*, "the law of retribution"), but more importantly it is central to God's law: what you do to others will be done to you in the judgment. - ESVSB

Mercy was an essential OT requirement for dealing with the poor (Micah 6:8; Zechariah 7:9-10). Mercy is likewise a requirement of believers in the NT (e.g., Matthew 5:7; Matthew 6:15; Matthew 18:32-35), or they will experience God's judgment rather than his mercy. - ESVSB

Mercy triumphs .. The verb "triumphs" or "exults over" (*katakauchatai*) appears only here, in James 3:14, and in Romans 11:18.

The person whose life is characterized by mercy is ready for the day of judgment, and will escape all the charges that strict justice might bring against him because by showing mercy to others he gives genuine evidence of having received God's mercy. - MSB

This is the spiritual principle that humans reap what they sow (cf. Matthew 6:14-15; Matthew 7:1-5; Matthew 18:22-25; Galatians 6:7). It may have been a well-known proverb in Palestine. - Utley

...if we are merciful in dealing with our fellowmen God will be merciful in dealing with us when we stand before Him (cf. Matthew 25:34-40). Mercy triumphs over judgment just as love triumphs over partiality. - Constable

In modern life, partiality sometimes arises because of differences in economic levels, race, religious preferences, political views, education backgrounds, and personal opinions, to name a few causes. 96 [Larry A. Mercer, "A Biblical and Cultural Study of the Problem of Racism," Bibliotheca Sacra 153:609 (January-March 1996):87-103.]

For Christians it is sometimes harder to be impartial toward sinners who flaunt their sin than it is those who acknowledge that they have sinned. However because Christ died for all we should reach out to all as He did rather than being unfriendly and cliquish. This is true whether the sinners are homosexuals, AIDS patients, the murderers of unborn children, liars, adulterers, thieves, or gossips. This reaching out will be an accurate indicator of the extent to which Christ's love controls us (cf. James 1:27). - Constable

÷Jas_2:14
James 2:14

James 2:14 What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

Section 2:14-26 Faith and Works
Connected 7 times in this section:
James 2:14; James 2:17; James 2:18; James 2:20; James 2:22; James 2:24; James 2:26;

The Difference between James and Paul
James' definition of *"faith"* = believing, mental activity, while ***Paul's*** definition of *faith* = the gospel system vs the Law of Moses.

James' "*works*" = obedience to the faith
(*Faith* is called a work in John 6:29, that is, a work (something) ordained by God.
Paul's "*works*" often mean meritorious works of the law and traditions.
- - - - - - - -

What does it profit .. (what good is it, ESV; what is the benefit, LEB; what use is it, NASB)
Rhetorical question, almost of impatience. Old word from ὀφελλω [ophello], *to increase*, in N. T. only here, and in James 2:16, and 1 Corinthians 15:32. - RWP

The Greek particle μὴ (*me)* at the beginning of the next question (Can that faith save him?) shows that James again expects a negative answer.

my brethren .. (James 1:2; James 1:9) Written to Christians. A favorite expression with James and occurs no less than fifteen times in this short epistle.

if someone says .. This is a THIRD CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE, "someone may say." It is structured like the diatribe form (a supposed objector) of James 1:26. - Utley

This important phrase governs the interpretation of the entire passage. James does not say that this person actually has faith, but that he claims to have it. - MSB

he has faith ..
The emphasis is not on the true nature of faith but on the false claim of faith. - BKC

Biblical faith (*pistis*) has several aspects: (1) doctrine (cf. 1 John 4:1-6; Jude 1:3, Jude 1:20; (2) personal relationship and commitment to Jesus (cf. John 1:12; John 3:16; Romans 10:9-13); and (3) lifestyle (cf. James and I John). All three aspects are involved in genuine, mature faith. - Utley

does not have works .. "but keeps on not having (μη [*mē*] and present active subjunctive ἐχῃ [*echēi*]) works. - RWP

can faith save him .. (can *such* faith save him, can *that* faith save him) .. A negative answer is anticipated in the Greek. Merely claiming to have faith is not enough. Genuine faith is evidenced by works. - BKC

The pronoun, and, in the Greek, the article prefixed to faith, are emphatic. "Can his faith save *him*, being such as he is?" - CBSC

James is not disputing the importance of faith. Rather, he is opposing the notion that saving faith can be a mere intellectual exercise void of a commitment to active obedience (cf. Matthew 7:16-18). The grammatical form of the question demands a negative answer. - MSB

James asserts that genuine faith affects the believer's behavior; faith that does not affect behavior is superficial and cannot save. - FSB

Saving faith is not simply a profession or an empty claim (James 2:14-17), nor is it merely the acceptance of a creed (James 2:18-20). Saving faith is that which produces an obedient life (James 2:21-26). - Spirit Filled Life Study Bible

save .. Deliver from God's wrath on the day of judgment, as usually in James (James 1:21; James 4:12; James 5:20; and probably in James 5:15) - NIVZSB

::Jas_2:15
James 2:15

James 2:15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,

If a brother or sister .. James illustrates his point by comparing faith without works to words of compassion without acts of compassion (cf. Matthew 25:31-46). - MSB

James envisioned a situation that may very well have taken place in his church in Jerusalem where there were many poor saints (Romans 15:25-31; 1 Corinthians 16:3). All the people in the illustration are genuine Christians as seems clear from the terms James used to describe them (cf. "brethren" in James 1:1; James 2:1; James 1:1 James 3:1). - Constable

is naked .. badly clothed, or destitute of such clothing as is fit for them, Job 22:6 1 Corinthians 4:11 - MPCNT

and destitute .. Under these two of nakedness and hunger, he comprehends all the calamities of human life, which may be relieved by the help of others; as food and raiment contain all the ordinary supports and comforts of life, Genesis 28:20 Matthew 6:25 1 Timothy 6:8. MPCNT

The picture drawn is one of extremest destitution, and, like the teaching of the whole passage, reminds us of Matthew 25:36, Matthew 25:43. - CBSC

James may be recalling the suffering, from the famine foretold by Agabus (Acts 11:28-30). CBSC

Daily .. (ἐφημέρου) for the day. Only here in New Testament.

of daily food .. In first-century Palestine and the Roman world in general, many poverty-stricken persons lacked the bare necessities of life. - NLTSB

:-Jas_2:16
James 2:16

James 2:16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit?

and one of you says .. How many words does it take to fill a hungry stomach? - KJVBC

Depart in peace .. (Present, Active, Imperative) A usual form of salutation, wherein, under the name of peace, they wished all prosperity and happiness to them they greeted, Mark 5:34 Luke 7:50 Luke 8:48. - MPCNT

This is a veiled prayer for God to provide their needs. It is an OT idiom for God's provision (cf. Judges 18:6; 1 Samuel 1:17; 1 Samuel 20:42; 2 Samuel 15:9). - Utley

For one in need of the basics of life, sentimental good wishes do little good, like the common Jewish farewell, Go, I wish you well (lit., "Go in peace," cf. Judges 18:6; 1 Samuel 1:17; 2 Samuel 15:9; Mark 5:34; Luke 7:50). If nothing is done to fill the pressing need for warm clothes and satisfying food, what good is it? - BKC

be warmed .. " i. e. be ye clothed; the warmth here mentioned being such as is procured by clothes, Job 31:20.

be filled .. satisfied with food; a metaphor from the fatting of cattle with grass or hay. The same word is used, Matthew 14:20 Mark 6:42 Philippians 4:12.

but you do not give ..
What good is charitable wishes without charitable deeds?

The speaker might suppose that he needs only to express his faith to make it happen. But without his participation (action), it is an empty wish. - NLTSB

things needed ..

What does it profit? .. The same phrase that James used to introduce this paragraph (James 2:14) is repeated for emphasis. - BKC

:-Jas_2:17
James 2:17

James 2:17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Paul in Hebrews 6:9-10 speaks of ***works*** that accompany salvation. Here James means ***works*** of obedience, cf. Romans 1:5 and Romans 16:26.

Thus also .. James is getting to the point of his examples.

faith by itself .. That is, alone, without deeds, works, that are evidence of one's faith.

In itself (καθ' ἑαυτην [*kath' heautēn*]). In and of itself (according to itself), inwardly and outwardly dead (?e??a [nekra]). Same idiom in Acts 28:16; Romans 14:22. It is a dead faith. RWP

if it does not have works .. faith by itself, or faith in and of itself with no evidence of action, is **dead**. BKC

It brings no results, and cannot lead to salvation (James 2:14). There can be no true faith that fails to produce **works** (here seen as care for the poor, but including good works of all kinds). - ESVSB

is dead .. This then is St James's objection to the faith of which he speaks. It is, while alone (literally, *by itself*), with no promise or potency of life, and it is, therefore, **dead**. - CBSC

Just as professed compassion without action is phony, the kind of faith that is without works is mere empty profession, not genuine saving faith. MSB

:Jas_2:18
James 2:18

James 2:18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

and one of you says .. James next introduced an objection to his thesis that faith is dead without works. He put it in the mouth of a hypothetical objector. This literary device of objection and response was a common one that Paul also used (Romans 9:19-20; 1 Corinthians 15:35-36). It is the diatribe.- Constable

James presents another diatribe (see note on James 1:13), in which he presents a hypothetical counterargument that one person may have the gift of faith while another person has the gift of works (see 1 Corinthians 12:7-9). NLTSB

Interpreters disagree on whether 1) "**someone**" is James' humble way of referring to himself or whether it refers to one of James' antagonists who objected to his teaching; and 2) how much of the following passage should be attributed to this antagonist as opposed to James himself. Regardless, James' main point is the same: the only possible evidence of true faith is works (cf. 2 Peter 1:3-11). MSB

you have faith, I have works .. What "someone" may say.

Grammatically this is a very ambiguous passage as to punctuation and pronoun antecedents. It is uncertain whether there is (1) one supporter of James' position; (2) one objector to James' position; (3) one of each; or (4) two opposing hypothetical persons alluded to by James. It is uncertain whether the quotation stops at v. 18a (NKJV, NRSV, NIV) or 18b (NASB, TEV) or if it goes through v. 19.

It is possible that James' supposed objector is claiming that Christians have different spiritual gifts, some faith and some works. James responds that faith is not a gift, but a bedrock relationship of trust in Christ. To know Christ is to emulate Him; to live as He lived; to love as He loved; to give oneself to others as He gave Himself to others (cf. 1 John 3:16). - Utley

Show me .. your faith ... Is this still the words of the "someone", or is it James' counter-statement?

The man who relied on faith is challenged to exhibit it, if he can, apart from works. - CBSC

Show does not mean here to *prove* to me, but to *exhibit* to me. JFB.

I will show you .. James implies that faith cannot be demonstrated apart from action (works). FSB

An alternative is clearly stated: 1) The mere profession of faith with no works or 2) a profession of faith shown to be alive by works.

Note [*pistin*] (faith) in both cases. James is not here discussing "works" (ceremonial works) as a means of salvation as Paul in Galatians 3 and Romans 4, but works as the evidence and a normal result of faith. - (A.T. Robinson)

:Jas_2:19
James 2:19

James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble!

believe there is one God .. This (monotheism) was the first test of orthodoxy for the Jews (cf. Deuteronomy 6:4-5). Yet the demons believe this also (cf. Matthew 4:3; Mark 5:7). - Utley

James continues to respond to the rhetorical opponent introduced in v. 18 (Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29; Romans 3:30). - FSB

Here, .. it seems more likely that his goal is to establish that God cannot disagree with Himself. - FSB

You do well .. Christianity is not only correct doctrine, but a relationship of obedience and love. Orthodoxy alone, without orthopraxy is empty (cf. 1 Corinthians 13). A theological, intellectual commitment to monotheism (cf. Romans 3:30; 1 Corinthians 8:4; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:5-6) does not make one right with God. Proper belief cannot save, for who among fallen humanity has perfectly accurate theology? - Utley

[orthopraxy = *ortho* = right, true, genuine; *praxy*= Latin from Gk, *practis*= practice;]

The demons believe .. James uses the demons as an illustration to show that intellectual ascent to the truth is not enough.

Matthew 4:3; Mark 5:7; Matthew 8:29-30; Luke 4:41; Acts 19:15

James's point seems to be that good works do not result from correct belief alone.

tremble .. "shudder," or "bristle up" (*phrissousin*, an onomatopoeic verb used only here in the NT). BKC

The word signifies extreme fear and horror, viz. such as the thoughts of their Judge strike into them. - MPCNT

The demons do more than just believe the fact, they ***shudder*** at it (not the proper response of faith).

The kind of purely intellectual "faith" (James 2:18) that demons have is far from the biblical faith that trusts God and results in obedience to him. - NIVZSB

:Jas_2:20
James 2:20

James 2:20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

But do you want to know .. (be shown, RSV, ESV; recognize NASB; evidence, NET NIV; This question expects a "yes" answer.

An ancient argumentative style, called the diatribe, which uses a hypothetical question-and-answer

format to convey the author's ideas. NIVZSB

O foolish man .. empty, vain, fruitless, hollow; The Greek term used here, *kenos*, refers to intellectual deficiency. In this context, it indicates a person who lacks understanding of spiritual truth. FSB

The term, as applied to men, is not found elsewhere in the New Testament, but is used with something of the same significance in the LXX. of Judges 9:4. The idea is primarily that of "emptiness," and the Greek adjective is almost literally the equivalent of our empty-headed. CBSC

faith without works is dead .. (useless, barren) James 2:20 and James 2:26 is an important theological summary statement. In his *Study Guide Commentary on James* Curtis Vaughan sees these three summary statements as constituting the main outline:

(1) genuine faith is not an empty claim (James 2:14-17);
(2) genuine faith is not mere acceptance of a creed (James 2:18-20); and
(3) genuine faith is faith that produces an obedient life (James 2:21-26, p. 56). - Utley

Mere mental assent to the Christian faith does not save anyone. The faith that saves, as both Paul and James affirm, embraces the truth of the gospel and acts accordingly [in obedience] - ESVSB

without works .. The Greek, *implies separate from the works* [ALFORD] which ought to flow from it if it were real. - JFB

Works .. works of obedience, cf. **Romans 1:5** and **Romans 16:26**. Paul at the beginning of Romans lets us know that when speaking of faith, he means a faith that is obeyed. Then again at the end he reminds us that faith is something to be obeyed to be saving faith.

dead .. Majority MSS = νεκρα *dead*; Some MSS = ἀργή *barren*,
See 2 Peter 1:8 (not idle nor unfruitful) and Matthew 12:36, but Hort urges "inactive" as the idea here, like money with no interest and land with no crops. RWP

The MSS vary between "dead" and the adjective rendered "idle" in Matthew 12:36, Matthew 20:3. The meaning is substantially the same. That which is without life is without the activity which is the one proof of life. - CBSC

÷Jas_2:21
James 2:21

James 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

James 2:21-26 James cites 3 illustrations of living faith:
1) Abraham (James 2:21-24);
2) Rahab (James 2:25); and
3) the human body and spirit (James 2:26). - MSB

Was not Abraham .. The Greek wording expects a "yes" answer to the question.

This question is often held to be directly opposed to Paul's statement that Abraham's faith, ... (Romans 4:1-5). Paul, however, was arguing for the *priority* of faith. James argued for the *proof* of faith. Paul declared that Abraham had faith, and was therefore justified, or declared righteous (Genesis 15:6), prior to circumcision (Genesis 17:11; cf. Romans 4:9). - BKC

Abraham our father .. Abraham was not only the father of us as Jews, (for to them he wrote), and according to the flesh, but as believers, and according to the promise; so all believers are called Abraham's children, Romans 4:11 Galatians 3:7. - MPCNT

justified by works .. The use of the word "justify" shews that its meaning is to "acquit" or "count as righteous" (Matthew 12:37; Acts 13:39; Ecclus. Sirach 26:29, ecclus Sirach 23:11 RSVA). - CBSC

James is using the term "works" in a different way than Paul. James is speaking of the Christian's lifestyle faith (cf. I John), while Paul is speaking of a works-righteousness of the Jews as a basis for being accepted by God (cf. Romans 10:2-3). - Utley

Abraham was ... found or declared to be justified, not only before God, but in the face of the world; and his faith (by which he had been justified above thirty years before in the sight of God) now approved as a true, lively, justifying faith, by this proof he gave of it, upon God's trying him in the offering up his son, Genesis 22:9, Genesis 22:12 - MPCNT

James points out that while Abraham believed God, it was his "work" of obedience that justified him before God.

When Paul says that a man is justified by faith (the gospel) apart from works, he is speaking of the works of the law of Moses, the rituals, circumcision, etc.

When .. Not just on hs way, but ***when*** *he offered Isaac.*!

offered Isaac his son .. "when he offered" [ALFORD], that is, brought as an offering at the altar; not implying that he actually offered him. - JFB

James explained that Abraham's faith was evident in his practice of Isaac's sacrifice (Genesis 22:12), and he was therefore justified, or declared righteous. BKC

on the altar .. the two acts [offered, altar] being thought of, not as successive, but simultaneous. It is remarkable that the only scriptural references, after Genesis 22, to the sacrifice of Isaac, are found in Wisdom 10:5 [Wisdom of Solomon 10:5 - RSVA] - CBSC

Jas_2:22

James 2:22

James 2:22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?

You see .. The singular "you" in this verse in the Greek text indicates that James was still addressing his objector. - Constable

faith working .. Abraham's faith and his actions (offering Isaac) were working together.

his works .. This describes the full scope of Abraham's faithful response to God throughout his life (see Genesis 12:1-4; Genesis 18:1-27). NLTSB

as a result ..

was made perfect .. (ἐτελειωθη [*eteleiōthē*]). First aorist passive indicative of τελειοω [*teleioō*], to carry to the end, to complete like love in 1 John 4:18. - RWP

faith was perfected .. This refers to bringing something to its end, or to its fullness. Just as a fruit tree has not arrived at its goal until it bears fruit, faith has not reached its end until it demonstrates itself in a righteous life. MSB

The verb translated was made complete (*eteleiothe*) means to "carry to the end." - BKC

James insists that deeds of obedience to God are always the result, or fulfillment, of faith. - NIVZSB

Here the tense is changed to that which denotes completion in a single act. It was "by works" (i. e. out of, as from the originating cause) that faith was brought to its completion. - CBSC

÷Jas_2:23
James 2:23

James 2:23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS." And he was called the friend of God.

Scripture was fulfilled .. Quoted from Genesis 15:6
Faith finds fulfillment in action. So it was with Abraham. James and Paul quoted the same passage—Genesis 15:6—to prove their points (cf. Romans 4:3). Paul said that Abraham was justified by faith, and James said that Abraham was justified by faith evidenced by what he did. - BKC

reckoned (imputed) ... NKJV=accounted; NIV=credited; RSV=reckoned;

James centers on Abraham's act of obedience while Paul centers on God's declaration of Abraham's righteousness. - ESVSB

James follows Jewish teaching by connecting the declaration of Abraham's righteous status before God in Genesis 15:6 with his faithful response when God "tested" him by asking him to sacrifice his son: "***Was not Abraham found faithful when tested, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness?***" (1 Maccabees 2:52 in the Apocrypha [NRSV]). NIVZSB

friend of God .. Isaiah 41:8; 2Ch_20:7 3 times in the Bible counting here, and a common description of Abraham among Jewish writers contemporary with James.

It was [a] ... current phrase in the Jewish schools, and has descended to the Arabs, with whom the name of *El Khalil Allah* (the friend of God), or more briefly *El Khalil,* ... Even Hebron, as the city of Abraham, and so identified with him, has become *El Khalil*, "the friend." - CBSC

Abraham was called **a friend of God**, in contrast to those who have no acts of obedience to prove their claims to faith and are therefore seen to be friends of this world (James 4:4). - ESVSB

Genesis does not call Abraham this, but see 2 Chronicles 20:7 and Isaiah 41:8 (and Jewish tradition: OT pseudepigrapha, *Jubilees 19:9*; *Jubilees 30:20*; Philo, Abraham 273 *The Works of Philo*). - NIVZSB

÷Jas_2:24
James 2:24

James 2:24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

[It is strange to see how many commentators *wiggle* around James' statement in this verse, even twisting it outrageously to affirm their doctrinal thesis that salvation is by "faith alone". Some, however, will affirm the truth that "faith" means following "obedience" but in doing so it seems to be a bitter taste in their mouth.]

You see .. The use of the plural "***you***" in this verse in the Greek text shows that James had completed his response to the objector. He was now addressing his readers directly again (cf. James 2:14-17). - Constable

justified ... δικαιόω - Thayer Definition: 1) to render righteous 2) to show, exhibit, one to be righteous, 3) to declare, pronounce, one to be just, righteous,

by what he does ..
In the context of James and on the subject of "showing partiality"; helping the needy with food and clothing, and "visiting the widows and orphans" it seems that "works" may refer to the deeds and benevolence that must be apart of the Christian's life. Faith must have it's "fruit" or the barren tree will not be justified. Matthew 7:16; Matthew 7:20; John 15:2;

not by faith alone ..
For James, "faith alone" means a bogus kind of faith, mere intellectual agreement without a genuine personal trust in Christ that bears fruit in one's life. - ESVSB
James, in agreement with Paul, argues that true faith is never alone, that it always produces works (cf. Ephesians 2:10). - ESVSB

That is, not like the demons who merely believe something is true (James 2:19), but by a belief that results in generous deeds like those of God himself (James 1:17) - NLTSB

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What are the components the scriptures speak of as leading to salvation:
[See also note "**What Does God Want From Us?**" at **Hebrews 11:6**.]

One must **Hear** the Gospel message: Romans 10:17, Matthew 7:24-27

One must **Believe** in Christ: Hebrews 11:6, Mark 16:16 (Not faith only- James 2:24, John 12:42) (To put one's trust, and commitment to Christ and his teaching.)

One must **Repent** of his sins: Acts 2:38, Acts 17:30, Luke 13:3

One must **Confess** his faith in the Lord: Matthew 10:32-33, Acts 8:36-37; Romans 10:10; 1 Timothy 6:12-13; 2 Timothy 1:8; 1 John 4:15;

One must be **Baptized** into a union with Christ:
Purpose: Acts 2:38, Mark 16:15-16, Acts 22:16, 1 Peter 3:20-21, Acts 10:48, John 3:5, Luke 7:30.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 with Galatians 3:27.

The Action is a burial: Romans 6:3-5, Acts 8:36-38, Mark 1:9-10, John 3:23.

Proper Candidates for baptism:
Those taught- Matthew 28:19, (See also Isaiah 28:9),
Believers- Mark 16:15-16, Acts 8:36-37,
Those who repent- Acts 2:38,
Those confessing their faith- Acts 8:36-38, Matthew 10:32-33.
Infants are not proper candidates: Matthew 18:3, Mark 10:13-15, Ezekiel 18:20, Romans 14:12.

One must remain **Faithful**: Revelation 2:10

Jas_2:25
James 2:25

James 2:25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent *them* out another way?

Likewise .. "in the same way", "Likewise also" *homoios de kai;*
James comes to his 4th point in his case of justification by works.

Rahab the harlot .. ("prostitute") She was Judaism's ultimate proof of God's forgiveness and the power of repentance (cf. Joshua 2). She also is an ancestor of Jesus (cf. Matthew 1:4). James uses two extremes, Abraham and Rahab, to prove his point. - Utley

James presents ***Rahab the prostitute*** (see Joshua 2:1) as his second example of good works that must accompany genuine faith. She declared her belief that the Lord God of Israel was the only God (Joshua 2:9-11), and her faith was made perfect ***by her actions*** when she provided hospitality and a means of escape to the Israelite spies (Joshua 2:1-6; Joshua 6:17; Joshua 6:25; Hebrews 11:31). - NLTSB

Apparently Rahab trusted in God before the spies ever arrived at her door (cf. Joshua 2:9-13). Rather than being originally part of the Israelite nation she was a proselyte to Judaism. Thus with these two examples James showed the necessity of works for believers regardless of one's background and origins. Abraham and Rahab were poles apart. - Constable

So, at some personal risk, she hid the Jewish spies from her own people, then lowered them on a rope so they could escape (Joshua 2:15). Thus she became a model of faith completed in works. - ESVSB

harlot .. (Ρααβ ἡ πορνη [*Raab hē pornē*]). - RWP

The question meets us, What led St James to select this example? St Paul does not refer to it, as he probably would have done, had he been writing with St James's teaching present to his thoughts, in any of the Epistles in which his name appears as the writer. In the Epistle to the Hebrews (Hebrews 11:31) it appears as one of the examples of faith, but this was most probably after St James had given prominence to her name. In the mention of Rahab by Clement of Rome (i. 12) we have an obvious echo from the Epistle just named, with the additional element of a typical interpretation of the scarlet thread as the symbol of the blood of Christ, by which those of all nations, even the harlots and the unrighteous, obtained salvation.

A more probable explanation is found in the connexion of St James with the Gospel according to St Matthew. The genealogy of the Christ given in ch. 1 of that Gospel must have been known to "the brother of the Lord," and in it the name of Rahab appeared as having married Salmon, the then "prince" of the tribe of Judah (Matthew 1:5; 1 Chronicles 2:50-51; Ruth 4:20-21). - CBSC

A rabbinic tradition ... tones down the history, and makes her simply the keeper of an inn. - CBSC

justified by works ..

received the messengers ...

sent them out another way ...

:Jas_2:26
James 2:26

James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

body ..

body without the spirit .. "*without breath*" "*without spirit*"

"Apart from breath" (the breath of life). It is not easy to tell when one is dead, but the absence of a sign of breath on a glass before the mouth and nose is proof of death. Startling picture of dead faith in our churches and church members with only a name to live (Revelation 3:2). RWP

dead .. Genesis 35:18

faith without works .. Good **works** are as necessary to **faith** as **breath** is to a physical **body** (Genesis 2:7). We cannot have one without the other. - NLTSB

dead also .. Faith without works is as dead as a body without a human spirit. It is of no practical value. This is James' final illustration and affirmation on the subject. Our faith becomes only dead orthodoxy when we stop obeying God. Vital faith then becomes dead faith. Both a dead body and dead faith were alive at one time. - Constable

James ends the passage with the statement, **"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."** Here the matter is summarized very beautifully. James compares **faith** to the human **body**. He likens **works** to **the spirit. The body without the spiri**t is lifeless, useless, valueless. **So faith without works is dead**, ineffective, worthless. Obviously it is a spurious faith, not genuine saving faith. - BBC

To summarize, then, James tests our faith by our answers to the following questions. Am I willing like Abraham to offer the dearest thing in my life to God? Am I willing like Rahab to turn traitor to the world in order to be loyal to Christ? - BBC

[**Amazing:** 1) Faithlife Study Bible; 2) MacArthur Study Bible; 3) ESV Study Bible; and 4) the NIV Zondervan Study Bible; ALL skip giving a comment on this verse!!! **WG**]

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WORKS - James 2:24, James 2:26, John 12:42, Galatians 5:6, Acts 10:34-35, Matthew 7:21, Hebrews 5:9.

Kinds of Works

1. Works of the flesh- Galatians 5:19-21
2. Our own works- Acts 7:41, 2 Timothy 1:9
3. Works of the law of Moses Galatians 2:16
4. Works of obedience- Acts 10:34-35, Luke 6:46, John 6:29.

÷Jas_3:1
James 3:1

James 3:1 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

My brethren ..

let not many of you become teachers .. This is a PRESENT MIDDLE (deponent) IMPERATIVE with a NEGATIVE PARTICLE which means to stop an act already in process. - Utley

The rabbi, or teacher, was an honored figure among the Jews, and perhaps some Christians were attracted to the prestige the position would bring them. - NIVZSB

The warning is parallel to that of our Lord in Matthew 23:8, seq., *"Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Teacher and all ye are brethren.*" - PC

What St James warns his "brethren" against is each man's setting himself up to be a teacher, and in this he echoes our Lord's command, (Matthew 23:8-10). - CBSC

teachers .. This word is translated "master" in the gospels and refers to a person who functions in an official teaching or preaching capacity (cf. Luke 4:16-27; John 3:10; Acts 13:14-15 ; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11). MSB

This seems to reflect either (1) the early church's worship where anyone could speak or (2) the place of honor of the rabbi in Jewish society. Teaching is listed as a spiritual gift in 1 Corinthians 12:28 and 1 Corinthians 14:26. It is also listed as a function of pastors (cf. 1 Timothy 3:1-2; Ephesians 4:11). In Acts 13:1 it is connected to prophets. But here it is viewed as an option for all believers. - Utley

knowing that we ... The change from the second person to the first is characteristic of the writer's profound humility. He will not give others a warning without at the same time applying it to himself. - CBSC

stricter judgment .. The Greek word for "condemnation", though literally meaning "judgment" only, is yet almost always used in the New Testament for an adverse judgment, (e. g. Matthew 23:14; Romans 2:2, Romans 13:2; 1 Corinthians 11:29, 1 Corinthians 11:34). - CBSC

Knowledge and leadership bring greater responsibility (cf. Luke 12:48). I believe the New Testament does teach degrees of blessings and punishment (cf. Matthew 10:15; Matthew 11:22; Matthew 11:24; Matthew 18:6; Matthew 25:21; Matthew 25:23; Mark 12:40; Luke 12:47-48; Luke 20:47). - Utley

The word translated "**judgment**" usually expresses a negative verdict in the NT, and here refers to a future judgment: 1) for the unbelieving false teacher, at the second coming (Jude 1:14-15); and 2) for the believer, when he is rewarded before Christ (1 Corinthians 4:3-5). This is not meant to discourage true teachers, but to warn the prospective teacher of the role's seriousness (cf. Ezekiel 3:17-18; Ezekiel 33:7-9; Acts 20:26-27; Hebrews 13:17). - MSB

÷Jas_3:2
James 3:2

James 3:2 For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he *is* a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

* In vs. 2-12 is James addressing "***teachers***"; or 2) is James now giving instructions to ***all*** believers; or 3) addressing "***teachers***" primarily but including "*all*".

we all .. "Teachers" and all believers.

stumble .. We ***stumble*** when not paying enough attention.
stumble (a metaphor for sinning; Gk. *ptaio*, translated "fails" in James 2:10) - ESVSB

in many things .. ... it is almost impossible to govern the tongue completely. With the thought comp. Ecclesiastes 7:20, [RSVA] "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not." *polla* is adverbial, as in Matthew 9:14, and may be either (1) "in many things," or (2) "oft." - PC

stumble in word ... Scripture contains much about all the evil which the tongue can cause (cf. Psalms 5:9; Psalms 34:13; Psalms 39:1; Psalms 52:4; Proverbs 6:17; Proverbs 17:20; Proverbs 26:28; Proverbs 28:23; Isaiah 59:3; Romans 3:13). MSB

a perfect man .. *fulfilled, mature, complete person* (*teleios aner*). Spiritual maturity requires a tamed tongue. - BKC

Because the tongue is so difficult to control (James 3:5-8), the person who never sins in their speech must be perfect in every way. -NIVZSB

When James says that a person who can control his mouth is a ***perfect man***, he probably has absolute perfection in view. It is a perfection, however, that will be attainable only in heaven. - ESVSB

able also to bridle the whole body .. James returns to the metaphor of James 1:26 and proceeds to develop it in the next verse James 3:3.

the whole body .. The "***whole body"*** is used to sum up the aggregate of all the temptations which come to us through the avenues of sense. - CBSC

÷Jas_3:3
James 3:3

James 3:3 Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body.

3:3–6 Here, James utilizes three images to illustrate that a small thing,
1) like the tongue, can have far-reaching effects. He uses a ***horse's bit*** (James 3:3) and
2) a ***ship's rudde***r (James 3:4) to convey that those who have control over their tongues have control over themselves.
3) He also uses the image of ***fire*** to convey that the tongue has great potential for destruction and harm (see note on James 3:6). -

bits in horses' mouths .. An analogy that shows how the tongue, even though small, has the power to control one's whole person and influence everything in his life.

The tongue, one of the smaller organs of the body, has a similar control over everything a person is and does. - ESVSB

The bit in the horse's mouth enables us to turn about the whole body. So the man who can govern his tongue has the mastery over the whole body. - PC

÷Jas_3:4
James 3:4

James 3:4 Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.

ships .. [Both the metaphor of bridle and rudder are used by Philo, a contemporary of James, to illustrate the same idea.

With Philo, Reason in man, the Divine Word in Creation, are compared both with the charioteer and the pilot. (*De Conf. ling*. p. 336. *De Abr.* p. 360). In the latter the very word which St James uses for "governor" is employed also by Philo. - CBSC

The same thoughts appear in many early Christian writings and hymns.

"Curb for the stubborn steed
Making its will give heed.
Helm of the ships that keep
Their pathway o'er the deep.
Clement of Alexandria - CBSC]

ships .. large .. great ships; The Greco-Roman world had large ships. Paul had been aboard a grain ship which carried 276 passengers plus cargo. Josephus records that he was on a ship with 600 passengers. He describes its dimensions as 180' by 65' by 44'. - Utley

driven by fierce winds .. By winds that would seem to leave the ship beyond control. It is probable that by the ***'fierce winds***' here as impelling the ship, the apostle meant to illustrate the power of the passions in impelling man. Even a man under impetuous passion would be restrained, if the tongue is properly controlled, as the ship driven by the winds is by the helm. - Barnes

turned by a very small rudder .. The rudder is a very small thing, but it enables the steersman to guide the ship wherever he will, in spite of the storm - PC

pilot .. *steersman*, literally where "the impulse of the steersman pleaseth"

:Jas_3:5
James 3:5

James 3:5 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

tongue is a little member .. [*Melos*] is old and common word for members of the human body (1 Corinthians 12:12, etc.; Romans 6:13, etc.). Little compared with the body, as the bit or the rudder is, compared with the horse or the ship.

boasts great things .. μεγαλαυχει; The Greek verb is a compound word, which does not occur elsewhere, but is used not unfrequently by Philo. The fact is not without interest, as indicating, together with the parallelisms just referred to, St James's probable acquaintance with that writer. - CBSC

boasts great things .. James seems to connect the power of the tongue with the idea of "pride." - Utley

Pride (cf. "bitter jealousy," "boast," James 3:14) is a major cause of the misuse of the tongue. - ESVSB

Some NT passages portray boasting positively as something to be encouraged (1 Corinthians 1:28-31), while others portray it negatively as something to be avoided (James 4:16). - FSB

great a forest ... This could be translated (1) forest or (2) "stacked lumber". This metaphor of the tongue as a spark focused James' mind on the destructive and uncontrollable nature of the tongue (James 3:6-8). - Utley

great forest (wood) .. ἡλίκην ὕλην The form of the Greek is somewhat more emphatic. **A little fire kindles how great a mass of timber.** The word translated "matter" means primarily "a forest—wood in growth;" -

CBSC

The illustration of a small spark setting abaze a great forest appears frequently Greek literature; i.e. Homer, Virgil, etc.

a little fire kindles .. The sense is, that a very little fire is sufficient to ignite a large quantity of combustible materials, and that the tongue produces effects similar to that. A spark will kindle a lofty pile; and a word spoken by the tongue may set a neighbourhood or a village 'in a flame.' - Barnes

:Jas_3:6
James 3:6

James 3:6 And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

tongue is a fire .. The metaphor of fire would have resonated with James' first-century audience. Ancients relied on wood or charcoal braziers to cook and heat their homes, and the draft from open windows increased the danger of fire spreading rapidly. Furthermore, ancients possessed few effective means for extinguishing fires. - FSB

Like **fire**, the tongue's sinful words can spread destruction rapidly, or as its accompanying smoke, those words can permeate and ruin everything around it. - MSB

a world of iniquity (unrighteousness, wickedness) .. The tongue is thus characterized, because it leads to and embraces all kinds of wickednesses. - PC

The tongue acts as an agent of the whole unrighteous world which is opposed to God (James 1:27; James 4:4) - NLTSB

James' writing style often reflects the Wisdom Literature of the OT, which also discussed the dangers of the tongue and speech (e.g., Proverbs 11:12-13; Proverbs 15:1; Proverbs 16:27-28). Wisdom literature teaches that a wise person will take counsel, but a fool will ignore it. - FSB

it defiles the whole body .. This means "to pollute or contaminate" (cf. Mark 7:20; Jude 1:23). - MSB

Careless speech can render a person unclean before God. - FSB

It is, as a fact, that which "defiles", better perhaps ***spots*** or ***stains***, the whole body. Every evil word is thought of as leaving its impress, it may be an indelible impress, as a blot upon the whole character. - CBSC

course .. τροχὸν only here in the New Testament. There is, however, no doubt about its meaning "wheel". - PC

sets on fire the course of nature .. Better translated "the circle of life," this underscores that the tongue's evil can extend beyond the individual to affect everything in his sphere of influence. - MSB

(lit., "*the cycle of existence*") likely means the "ups and downs" of life. The tongue turns upside down every aspect of life in the community as well as in the individual. - ESVSB

The tongue can destroy or corrupt the entire course of a person's life, or the entire course of a community's existence. - FSB

(lit., "the wheel of existence" or "wheel of birth," *ton trochon tes geneseos*). It is as though the tongue is at the center or hub of the wheel of nature and, like a fireworks display, the wheel is set on fire at the center. - BKC

This is literally "the wheel of birth." For a good discussion of this rare term see M. R. Vincent's *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 1, pp. 356–357. It seems to mean a person's life from birth until death, which can even affect future generations. Both of these phrases in v. 6 show the intensive and destructive potential of human speech. - Utley

it is set on fire by hell .. Or *for it will burn in hell* (Greek *Gehenna*). *Gehenna* is the place of eternal punishment (Matthew 5:22, Matthew 5:30; Matthew 23:15), in contrast to *Hades*, the abode of the dead (Luke 16:23; Acts 2:31). The reference to ***hell*** is an allusion to the devil (James 4:7; Matthew 5:22; John 8:44) as the ultimate source of evil speech. - NTLSB

This is literally "***being inflamed by Gehenna***," - Utley
".. *being fed by the flames of hell*" - Moff. Translation

Evil speech destroys because it comes from Satan himself. - ESVSB

Hell .. *gehenna* = 12 times ; (11 times used by Jesus - the only other time is here.)

gehenna (or *valley of Hinnom)*. In Christ's time this valley that lay SW of Jerusalem's walls served as the city dump and was known for its constantly burning fire. Jesus used that place to symbolize the eternal place of punishment and torment (cf. Mark 9:43, Mark 9:45). To James "hell" conjures up not just the place but the satanic host that will some day inherit it—they use the tongue as a tool for evil. - MSB

the ***Valley of Hinnom*** south of Jerusalem where human sacrifice had been offered [Jeremiah 7:31] and where continuous burning of rubbish made it a fit illustration of the lake of fire. - BKC

... refers to the valley of the sons of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem. This is the metaphor Jesus used to describe the punishment and place for those who reject faith in God. It was turned into the garbage dump for Jerusalem because this valley was the site in the OT where the fire god Molech was worshiped by child sacrifice (cf. 2 Kings 16:3; 2 Kings 17:17; 2 Kings 21:6; 2 Kings 23:10; 2 Chronicles 28:3; 2 Chronicles 33:6; Leviticus 18:21). This is the only use of "Gehenna" outside of the words of Jesus (cf. Matthew 5:22, Matthew 5:29-30; Matthew 10:28; Matthew 18:9; Matthew 23:15, Matthew 23:33; Mark 9:43, Mark 9:47; Luke 12:5). This metaphor is referring to the activity of the evil one in our daily lives. James must have personally experienced or observed the negative effects of human speech! - Utley

:Jas_3:7
James 3:7

James 3:7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.

cf. James 1:26

Four kinds of flesh trained
1. beasts
2. birds
3. serpents (reptiles)
4. fish

Every kind .. This reflects the fourfold order of the creation of animal species in Genesis 1:26 and Genesis 9:2.

It may be noted that the Authorised Version in this instance returns to Wycliffe, who used the word in its old sense, and that all the intermediate versions give "nature." The fourfold classification is obviously

intended to be exhaustive—and "beasts" must therefore be taken in its common familiar meaning of "quadruped." - PC

It is unnecessary to refine on the expressions used here, by attempting to prove that it is *literally* true that every species of beasts, and birds, and fishes has been tamed. The apostle is to be understood as speaking in a general and popular sense, showing the remarkable power of man over those things which are by nature savage and wild. - BN

tamed .. Mankind was given dominion (cf. Genesis 1:26, Genesis 1:28; [Ecclesiasticus Sirach 17:4 RSVA]. Humans can domesticate and control every animal except themselves. - Utley

of mankind .. rather, "by the nature of man": man's characteristic power taming that of the inferior animals. The dative in the Greek may imply, "Hath suffered itself to be brought into tame subjection TO the nature of men." So it shall be in the millennial world; even now man, by gentle firmness, may tame the inferior animal, and even elevate its nature. - JFB

:Jas_3:8
James 3:8

James 3:8 But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* **an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.**

Illustration: one preacher always said to his audience, "I may not know you, but I think I know about you, you have trouble with your tongue, we all do."

an unruly evil .. *"a restless evil"; "an uncontrollable evil"*

This is used of the nonstop movement of a snake's tongue (cf. Genesis 3:1, Genesis 3:4-5; Psalms 140:3) and possibly satanically inspired "teachers." - Utley

No one **can tame the tongue** because **it is a restless evil**, an unruly, unsteady, staggering, reeling evil (like the "unstable" man of James 1:8). - BKC

full of deadly poison .. This might allude to the serpent in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1), who is identified with the devil (Revelation 20:2). - NLTSB

Like the poison of a serpent, the tongue is loaded with the venom of hate and death-dealing gossip. Psalms 140:3 - BKC

deadly .. death-bringing; Deadly (*thanatephoros*); here only in the New Testament. In the LXX. it is found in Numbers 18:22; Job 33:23; 4 Maccabees 8:17, 24; 15:23 - PC

The adjective is found in the LXX. version of Job 33:23, for "angels or messengers of death." - CBSC

:Jas_3:9
James 3:9

James 3:9 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God.

James describes the tongue as double-minded; see note on James 1:8. FBS

With it .. therefore, (ἐν αὐτῃ *en autei*); Instrumental use of *en*. also Romans 15:6.

our God and Father .. [Some MSS say "Lord" instead of God.] But as Messiah is called "Father," Isaiah 9:6, so God the Father is called by the Son's title, "Lord": showing the unity of the Godhead. "**Father**" implies His *paternal* love; "**Lord**," His dominion. - JFB

"we bless *our* Lord and Father" This grammatical construction (one ARTICLE and two NOUNS) is ambiguous. It can refer to Jesus and the Father (cf. James 1:1) or to YHWH alone. Most translations prefer the second option because of the mention of human beings created in God's image. - Utley

we bless our God and Father .. It was traditional for Jews to add "blessed be He" to a mention of God's name (cf. Psalms 68:19, Psalms 68:35). However, the tongue also wishes evil on people made in God's image. This points out the hypocritical inconsistency of the tongue's activities. - MSB

Similar to the forked tongue of a snake, man's uncontrolled **tongue** both emits **praise** and spews out curses. "Praise," or "saying a good word" (*eulogoumen*) of our Lord and Father (this is the only place where the NT uses this title of God) is polluted by a "curse," or "wishing evil" (*katarometha*) on men. - BKC

Praising o***ur Lord and Father*** is the best activity of the tongue, whereas cursing ***those*** made in his image is one of the worst, because it is an implicit curse on God himself (Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 9:6). - NLTSV

we curse men .. The Greek term here, *kataraomai*, often translated "to curse," refers to causing injury or harm to someone through a statement. Ancients believed such statements had supernatural power (Mark 11:12-14, Mark 11:21-22). - FSB

"**curse men**" This is a PRESENT MIDDLE (deponent) INDICATIVE. Cursing means to call down problems and evil on another using the power of God's name (cf. Luke 6:28; Romans 12:14). In context it may refer to rival teachers (cf. James 3:14). - Utley

made in the similitude of God .. (likeness, image) *homoiosis*; The words which are taken from ?Genesis 1.26 are added to show the greatness of the sin. - PC

This verse reflects the worth and dignity of mankind whether poor or rich, slave or free, male or female, Jew or Gentile (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11). To speak evil of another is to criticize the God who made them (cf. Psalms 139:1 ff). The term "**likeness**" (image) is left undefined in Genesis. There are several theories as to the exact components of "**the image**": (1) conscious life; (2) rational ability; (3) moral consciousness; and/or (4) volitional choice. - Utley

:Jas_3:10
James 3:10

James 3:10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

Out of the same mouth .. This reflects the truth of Matthew 7:15 ff. Human speech has wonderful potential for good, but it also has terrible potential for evil. - Utley

The tongue, says AESOP, is at once the best and the worst of things. So in a fable, a man with the same breath blows hot and cold. "Life and death are in the power of the tongue" (compare Psalms 62:4). - JFB

these things ought not so to be .. The verb, strictly. speaking, denotes not so much a state, as the coming into a state: *these things ought not to occur in this way*. - CBSC

so to be .. "so to keep on happening." - WPNT

÷Jas_3:11
James 3:11

James 3:11 Does a spring send forth fresh *water* and bitter from the same opening?

3:11–12 In three illustrations of ridiculous natural contrasts, James drives home the point that blessing God while cursing his people cannot be countenanced. - ESVSB

3:11–12 Both questions in vv. 11 and 12 expect negative responses. - Utley

Can both fresh (lit., "sweet," *glyky*) **water and salt** (lit., "bitter," *pikron*) **water flow,** or "bubble up," **from the same spring**? - BKC

fountain .. (***spring***); The Greek gives the article, **the fountain**,- CBSC

Springs were the key to survival in dry Palestine, and the placement of villages and towns tended to depend on their presence. - ESVSB

same place .. Marg. *hole*. The Greek word means *opening*, *fissure*, such as there is in the earth, or in rocks from which a fountain gushes. - BN

Both verb and noun in the Greek are more vivid. Our word **spurt** or **gush**, if it could be used transitively, would answer to the former; our **mouth**, or "source" - CBSC

The image here is appropriate to the scene of the Epistle, Palestine, wherein salt and bitter **springs** are found. Though "sweet" **springs** are sometimes found near, yet "sweet and bitter" (water) do not flow "at the **same place**" (*aperture*). Grace can make the same mouth that "sent forth the bitter" once, send forth the sweet for the time to come: as the wood (typical of Christ's cross) changed Marah's bitter water into sweet. - JFB

Comp. the sweetening of the **spring** which supplied the college of the Sons of the Prophets in 2 Kings 2:19, and the symbolic healing of the waters in Ezekiel 47:9. - CBSC

÷Jas_3:12
James 3:12

James 3:12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

Can such a tree yeild both?

Can the fig tree .. —implying that it is an impossibility: as before in James 3:10 he had said it "ought not so to be." James does not, as Matthew (Matthew 7:16-17), make the question, "Do men gather figs of thistles?" His argument is, No tree "can" bring forth fruit inconsistent with its nature, as for example, the fig tree, olive berries: - JFB

olives … figs .. Just as no tree would produce two kinds of fruit, so also a true believer would not produce both blessings of God and curses toward others. - ESVSB

James may again be reflecting the teaching of Jesus (see Matthew 15:18-19) - NIVZSB

It will be seen that the thought in (v.12) is different from that in Matthew 7:16, to which it bears a superficial resemblance. There the thought is that a good tree cannot yield bad fruit. Here it is that a tree must yield that which corresponds to its nature; a fig tree must yield figs and not olives, etc. -PC

so can no fountain … salt … and fresh —Some authorities read, "Neither can a salt (water spring) yield fresh." So the mouth that emits cursing, cannot really emit also blessing. - JFB

Jas_3:13
James 3:13

James 3:13 Who *is* **wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct** *that* **his works** *are done* **in the meekness of wisdom.**

In v. 13, James makes a transition from discussing teachers and the tongue to dealing with **wisdom's** impact on everyone's life. He supports the truth of OT **wisdom** literature (Job to Song of Solomon), that **wisdom** is divided into two realms—man's and God's. - MSB

wise and understanding .. Perhaps referring especially to the teachers (James 3:1) - NIVSB

wise and understanding .. "Wise" is the common Gk. word for speculative knowledge and philosophy, but the Hebrews infused it with the much richer meaning of skillfully applying knowledge to the matter of practical living.

The word for "**understanding**" is used only here in the NT and means a specialist or professional who could skillfully apply his expertise to practical situations. James is asking who is truly skilled in the art of living. - MSB

The Septuagint, an ancient Greek translation of the OT, often employs this combination of words to describe a person who lives in accordance with the insight given by God (Deuteronomy 1:13, Deuteronomy 1:15; Deuteronomy 4:6). People demonstrate ***wisdom*** if their deeds reflect God's commands. - FSB

The ***wisdom*** that comes from God (James 1:5) is not mere intellectual skill nor the collection of information, it is practical insight and spiritual **understanding** which expresses itself in moral uprightness, as described in James 3:17-18 (see also Job 28:28; Proverbs 1:2-4; Proverbs 2:10-15). - NLTSB

show by good conduct .. *show it by their good life*. People with intellectual gifts are too often characterized by pride in their own ideas that makes them difficult to get along with. The ***wisdom*** all believers should seek above all else (Proverbs 4:5-9; Proverbs 8:10-11), by contrast, is inseparably connected to a godly lifestyle. - NIVZSB

works .. in meekness of wisdom .. ***meekness***. Also rendered "*gentleness*," it is the opposite of arrogance and self-promotion (see note on Matthew 5:5; cf. James 1:21; Numbers 12:3; Galatians 5:23). The Greeks described it as power under control. - MSB

wisdom .. The kind that comes only from God (James 1:5; cf. Job 9:4; Job 9:28; Psalms 104:24; Psalms 111:10; Proverbs 1:7; Proverbs 2:1-7; Proverbs 3:19-20; Proverbs 9:10; Jeremiah 10:7, Jeremiah 10:12; Daniel 1:17; Daniel 2:20-23; Romans 11:33; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 3:10; Colossians 2:3) - MSB

Those who are wise should demonstrate their ***wisdom*** in how they live, by deeds done with humility. - FSB

Wisdom for James is not merely intellectual but also behavioral. - ESVSB

meekness ... *"in the gentleness"* This means the "controlled strength" of domesticated animals. This was a uniquely Christian virtue. It typifies the life of Christ (cf. Matthew 11:29; 2 Corinthians 10:1; Philippians 2:8). It is advocated for all believers (cf. Matthew 5:5; Galatians 5:23; Ephesians 4:2). ***Gentleness*** or meekness is a defining quality of God's ***wisdom***. - Utley

Meekness comes not from cowardice or passivity but rather from trusting God and therefore being set free from anxious self-promotion . - ESVSB

÷Jas_3:14
James 3:14

James 3:14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.

The tongue is a barometer of the heart.

Verses 14–16 describe false wisdom. This verse assumes the presence of unqualified teachers. - Utley

But if .. "if" This is a FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE which is assumed to be true. - Utley

bitter envy .. *"bitter jealousy" "bitterness of jealousy"* This is also listed as sin in 2 Corinthians 12:20; Galatians 5:20; and Ephesians 4:31. Egotism has no place among the people of God, especially in teachers. - Utley

The Gk. term for "***bitter***" was used of undrinkable water. When combined with "***envy***" it defines a harsh, resentful attitude toward others. - MSB

self-seeking .. Sometimes translated "**strife**," it refers to selfish ambition that engenders antagonism and factionalism. The Gk. word came to describe anyone who entered politics for selfish reasons and sought to achieve his agenda at any cost (i.e., even if that meant trampling on others).- MSB

selfish ambition .. Originally this meant "to spin for hire" but later was used metaphorically of aggressive, political ambition (cf. Philippians 1:17). It refers to an egotistical, jealous ambition—"my way or no way"—among leaders. - Utley

"Selfish ambition" is a divisive willingness to split the group in order to achieve personal power and prestige (it is translated "***rivalry***" in Galatians 5:20; Philippians 1:17; Philippians 2:3). - ESVSB

selfish ambition .. Translates a Greek word that Aristotle used to describe the political factions that were convulsing Athens in his day (*Politics* 5.3.1302b; cf. Romans 2:8; 2 Corinthians 12:20; Galatians 5:20; Philippians 1:17; Philippians 2:3). - NIVZSB

in your hearts .. The real fountain of such bitter envious attitude, boasting (glorying) of wisdom which is a lie against the truth.

do not boast .. (with a negative particle, which means to stope an act that is already in process.)

James likely is admonishing his audience to refrain from sinning against the truth by ***boasting*** of their wisdom. - FSB
Do not **brag** about having wisdom when you are filled with **selfishness**. - NIVZSB

do no .. lie again the truth .. ***Truth*** may refer to the gospel (James 1:18; James 5:19) or, more generally, to that which is not false. - FSB

÷Jas_3:15
James 3:15

James 3:15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic.

from above". . This circumlocution was a rabbinical way of referring to YHWH. These teachers may have been vociferously claiming divine insight and knowledge. See note at James 1:17 b. - Utley

earthly, sensual, demonic .. A description of man's wisdom as: 1) limited to earth; 2) characterized by humanness, frailty, an unsanctified heart, and an unredeemed spirit; and 3) generated by Satan's forces (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 11:14-15). - MSB

earthly, unspiritual, demonic .. James describes worldly behavior in terms that "progress" from bad to worse, recalling the list in vv. 5b–6. Such behavior is ultimately earthbound, absolutely sensual as opposed to spiritual, and its origin is in the cosmic powers of darkness. ESVSB

earthly, sensual, devilish .. Each word is full of meaning.

(1) The counterfeit wisdom is "**earthly**" in its nature and origin as contrasted with that which cometh from above. (Comp. St Paul's "who mind earthly things," Philippians 3:19).

(2) It is "**sensual**." The word is used by classical writers for that which belongs to the "soul" as contrasted with the "body." This rested on the twofold division of man's nature. The psychology of the New Testament, however, assumes generally the threefold division of body, soul, and spirit, the second element answering to the animal, emotional life, and the third being that which includes reason and will, the capacity for immortality and for knowing God. Hence the adjective formed from "soul" acquired a lower meaning, almost the very opposite of that which it once had, and expresses man's state as left to lower impulses without the control of the spirit. So St Paul contrasts the natural man with the spiritual (1 Corinthians 2:14), the natural and the spiritual body (1 Corinthians 15:44, 1 Corinthians 1:1).

(3) In "**devilish**" we have yet a darker condemnation. Our English use of the same word, "devil," for the two Greek words *diabolos* and *dœmonion*, tends, however, to obscure St James's meaning. The epithet does not state that the false wisdom which he condemns came from the devil, or was like his nature, but that it was **demon-like**, as partaking of the nature of the "demons" or "unclean spirits." - CBSC

earthly .. (from the world)

Farrar well says that **this wisdom** is "earthly because it avariciously cares for the goods of earth (Philippians 3:19) - PC

sensual .. (selfish, unspiritual, physical, natural) .. *psychike* ψυχική;

It is ***unspiritual*** because it does not acknowledge or respond to God's Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:14; Jude 1:19). - NLTSB

unspiritual. The Greek word refers to being caught up in the life of this world in contrast to the realm of God and his kingdom (1 Corinthians 2:14; 1 Corinthians 15:44; 1 Corinthians 15:46; Jude 1:19). NIVZSB

Sensual (ψυχική); Vulgate, *animalis*; R.V. margin, *natural or animal*. The position of the word is remarkable, occurring between ἐπίγειος and δαιμονιώδης. It is never found in the LXX., nor (apparently) in the apostolic Fathers.

In the New Testament it occurs six times—three times of the "natural" body, which is contrasted with the σῶμα πνευματικόν (1 Corinthians 15:44 (twice), 1 Corinthians 15:46); and three times with a moral emphasis resting upon it, "and in every instance a *most* depreciatory" (see 1 Corinthians 2:14), "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God," and Jude 1:19, Ψυχικοὶ, πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες.

The ψυχή in general in the New Testament is that which is common to man with the brute creation, including the passions, appetites, etc.; and therefore, by the use of this word ψυχικός to describe the wisdom which cometh **not from above, but is** "earthly, sensual [or, 'animal'], devilish," we are reminded of the contrast between the spirit of man which goeth upward and the spirit of a beast which goeth downward (Ecclesiastes 3:21).

The "animal" man, then, is one who is ruled entirely by the ψυχὴ in the lower sense of the word; and by the depreciatory sense given to the adjective we are strongly reminded that "nature" is nothing without the aid of grace.

See further Archbishop Trench's '*Synonyms of the N. T.*,' § lxxi., and for the later history of the word (it was applied by the Montanists to the orthodox), Suicer's '*Thesaurus*,' vol. ii. p. 1589.- PC

demonic .. (*of the devil*) This relates to content that is supernatural, but not from God (cf. 1 Timothy 4:1; Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 1:16). The presence of demonic wisdom leads to confusion and evil practices (James 3:16). However, the context may imply that these teachers are not only doctrinally false, but also morally and motivationally false. - Utley

It is ***demonic*** since it comes from the devil, the ultimate source of this destructive wisdom (James 3:6; James 4:6; 1 Timothy 4:1). NLTSB

Devilish (δαιμονιωδης [*daimoniōdēs*]). Late adjective from δαιμονιον [*daimonion*] (demon) and so demoniacal or demon-like, here only in N. T. - RWP

Describes the ultimate origin of earthly wisdom (compare to James 3:6). - FSB

:Jas_3:16
James 3:16

James 3:16 For where envy and self-seeking *exist,* confusion and every evil thing *are* there.

Envy and self-seeking .. See notes on James 3:14

confusion .. *disorder*; "*Disorder*" (Gk. *akatastasia*) connotes a chaotic frenzy of fighting (cf. James 4:1) in the church. The related adjective (Gk. *akatastatos*) means "unstable" (James 1:8) and "restless" (James 3:8). ESVSB

James describes the evil consequences of false wisdom. Earthly wisdom leads to jealousy and selfish ambition, which can culminate in a troubling situation for Christian communities. - FSB
This is the **disorder** that results from the instability and chaos of human wisdom. MSB

every evil thing .. *every evil practice;* Lit. "every worthless (or vile) work." - MSB

:Jas_3:17
James 3:17

James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

The virtues James lists are predominantly nonselfish and nonaggressive; those who practice these virtues show greater concern for others than for themselves. They are opposite of the vices described in **vv. 14–16**.
In the Greek text, it is clear that James arranged this list of virtues using assonance, first with *e*, then with *a: eirenikos, epieikes, eupeithes, eleos, karpos, agathos, adiakritos, anypokritos.* Since ancients primarily learned through hearing, writers utilized sound to enhance the sense of the text and aid in memorization. Biblical writers composed lists of virtues and vices to inspire changes in behavior (e.g., Psalms 15:1; Proverbs 6:17-19; Hosea 4:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-24; Ephesians 5:3-5). - FBS

wisdom .. see not on James 3:13.

from above .. James 1:17; James 3:15; James 3:17;

wisdom from above .. The answer to the "disorder" of v. 16 is to seek ***wisdom from above,*** which produces character qualities beginning with purity and concluding with peace (cf. Galatians 5:22-23). - ESVSB

first pure .. literally, "chaste," "sanctified": pure from all that is "earthly, sensual (animal), devilish" (James

3:15). This is put, *"first of all*," - JFB

pure .. The term *hagnos* has the same Greek root as "holy" (*hagios*). It implies that it is free from ethical defilement (cf. James 4:8). - Utley

This refers to spiritual integrity and moral sincerity. (cf. Psalms 24:3-4; Psalms 51:7; Matthew 5:8; Romans 7:22-23; Hebrews 12:14). - MSB

peaceable .. This is the Greek term *eirene*. It was used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew term *shalom*. In the OT "peace" is usually associated with (1) cessation of war and hostilities and the promotion of harmony and (2) the presence of health, prosperity and wholeness, ultimately in this sense of the reign of the Messiah and eschatological salvation (cf. Romans 15:13). The form of the word used here also occurs in Hebrews 12:11. - Utley

peaceable. Means "peace loving" or "peace promoting" (cf. Matthew 5:9) - MSB

gentle ... The word *epiekes* means "sweet reasonableness" or "forbearance." It does not push its own rights or opinions without listening to others and respecting others (cf. Philippians 4:5; 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 3:2; 1 Peter 2:18). - Utley

gentle .. a character trait of sweet reasonableness - MSB

forbearing .. It describes, as in Aristotle (Eth. 10:6), the temper that does not press its rights, that is content to suffer wrong (comp. Philippians 4:5; 1 Timothy 3:3).

willing to yield .. *reasonable; easy to be entreated; accommodating; submissive;* It implies a willingness to hear and respond appropriately, not selfishly or egotistically. - Utley

willing to yield .. The original term described someone who was teachable, compliant, easily persuaded, and who willingly submitted to military discipline or moral and legal standards. For believers, it defines obedience to God's standards (cf. Matthew 5:3-5). - MSB

easy to be entreated .. literally, "easily persuaded," tractable; not harsh as to a neighbor's FAULTS. - JFB

full of mercy ... This is not just feelings but actions. Biblical love and compassion issue in active love and service, not sentimentalities. This term is linked with the next one and both speak of the care of the poor, needy, and alienated of James 2:15-16. - Utley

good fruits .. This is linked with "full of mercy." This is a concern and care for those in need. In Philippians 1:9–11 it is connected to love, knowledge, and discernment. - Utley

Good deeds the fruit of righteousness (Philippians 1:11) - RWP

without partiality ... "free from prejudice"; "without a trace of partiality"

without partiality .. The Gk. word occurs only here in the NT and denotes a consistent, unwavering person who is undivided in his commitment and conviction and does not make unfair distinctions. - MSB

Without partiality (ἀδιάκριτος); here only in the New Testament. The word is used in the LXX. in Proverbs 25:1; and by Ignatius (Ephesians 3; Magn. 15; Trall. 1), but none of these passages throw light on its meaning. It may be either (1) without variance, or (2) without doubtfulness, or (3) **without partiality**; probably (1) as R.V. text. - PC

without partiality .. recurring to the warning against partial "respect to persons," James 2:1, James 2:4, James 2:9. JFB

without hypocrisy ... it must refer, like the rest of the six epithets, to our relations to others; our peaceableness and mercy towards others must be "without dissimulation." - JFB

Not hypocritical, sincere, unfeigned (Romans 12:9). - RWP

÷Jas_3:18
James 3:18

James 3:18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

fruit of righteousness ... (a harvest of righteousness, ESV, RSV; the seed whose fruit is righteousness, NASB; Peacemakers who sow, NIV;)

The fruit of righteousness; an expression taken from the Old Testament; e.g. Proverbs 11:30; Amos 6:12; and occurring also in Philippians 1:11. - PC

It is commonly said that "**the fruit of righteousness**" means "the fruit which is righteousness." The analogy of a like structure, however, in Luke 3:8 ("worthy fruits of repentance"), Ephesians 5:9 ("the fruit of the Spirit"), and other passages, is in favour of taking it as the fruit which righteousness produces. - CBSC

fruit … sown .. Compare Psalms 97:11; Isaiah 61:3, "trees of righteousness." Anticipatory, that is, the seed whose "fruit," namely, "righteousness," shall be ultimately reaped, is now "sown in peace." "Righteousness," now in germ, when fully developed as "fruit" shall be itself the everlasting reward of the righteous. As "sowing in peace" (compare "sown in dishonor," 1 Corinthians 15:43) produces the "fruit of righteousness," so conversely "the work" and "effect of righteousness" is "peace." - JFB

Righteousness and **peace** appear together often in the Bible (e.g., Psalms 72:7; Psalms 85:10; Isaiah 32:17; Hebrews 12:11).
This statement could have the sense of "***fruit growing out of righteousness.***" Alternatively, it could be intended as a phrase defining the fruit, thus "***fruit that consists of righteousness***." - FSB

harvest of righteousness .. The "fruit" that comes from peacemaking in the Christian community will be the righteous conduct that God will bless (but this is not produced by "the anger of man"; see note on James 1:20). - ESVSB

harvest of righteousness .. The harvest, or "***fruit***," that peacemakers produce is community-wide conduct that pleases God (James 1:20): unity in place of disunity, concern for others in place of selfishness. Jesus pronounced a blessing on "peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9). - NIVZSB

is sown .. This is a PRESENT PASSIVE INDICATIVE. The emphasis is on giving, not gathering! We are all sowing some kind of seed. What kind are you sowing? - Utley

Is sown in peace .. (ἐν εἰρηνῃ σπειρεται [*en eirēnēi speiretai*]). Present passive indicative of σπειρω [*speirō*], to sow. The seed which bears the fruit is sown, but James catches up the metaphor of καρπος [*karpos*] (fruit) from verse 17. Only in peace is the fruit of righteousness found. - RWP

in peace by those who make peace .. This passage may reflect Isaiah 32:17. It is obvious that James 3:18 is contrasting James 3:16. - Utley

them that make peace .. True peace is found only in the character of God (Isaiah 9:6; 2 John 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Philippians 4:7, Philippians 4:9). James demonstrates concern about discord and rivalry in the church, and he encourages peace in order to foster this characteristic in the community. - FBS

Peace .. is the seed sown that yields a harvest (lit., "fruit") of righteousness. The truly wise man is a man of peace. BKC

÷Jas_4:1
James 4:1

James 4:1 Where do wars and fights *come* from among you? Do *they* not *come* from your *desires for* pleasure that war in your members?

Warfare among brothers, caused by carnal desire.

4:1 Characteristically, James introduced this new section with a rhetorical question, **What causes fights and quarrels among you?** - BKC

4:1 In contrast to those who make peace, **quarrels** and **fights** are caused by the **passions** or self-centered desires ("hedonism" comes from Gk. *hedone*, "passions") that are causing these people to make **war** against each other in the church. - ESVSB

wars and fights .. (quarrels and fights); Lit. *wars and battles*.
These are military terms with slightly different connotations. The first term (*polemos*) refers to an entire military campaign, while the second (*maxe*) refers to an individual battle. - Utley

desires .. (passions; lusts; pleasures;) The Gk. word (from which the Eng. word "hedonism" derives) always has a negative connotation in the NT. The passionate desires for worldly pleasures that mark unbelievers (James 1:14; Ephesians 2:3; 2 Timothy 3:4; Jude 1:18) are the internal source of the external conflict in the church. James 1:14; James 1:15 - MSB

James uses the Greek word translated ***evil desires*** again in James 4:3 (translated "pleasure") to enclose the entire paragraph and indicate the source of conflict and unanswered prayer (Luke 8:14; Titus 3:3). - NLTSB

desires that battle within you .. James again spotlights inner dividedness as a basic issue (vv. James 4:4-5; James 1:10-11; James 3:9-11).

your members .. Not church members, but body members (Romans 6:13) James uses members of the body to illustrate the various members of the Christ's body, the church. - MSB

Conflict comes out of (*ek*) inner sensual lusts or pleasures (*hedonon*; cf. James 4:3)

"in your members" .. Our physical bodies are not evil, nor the source of evil, but they are the battle ground of evil (cf. Romans 6:12-23). This was a major ontological difference between Greek philosophy and biblical Christianity.
It is just possible the "**members**" may refer to the body of Christ, the Church. It is uncertain whether the warning is (1) internal (fallen nature); (2) external (problem in the church); or (3) both. - Utley

÷Jas_4:2
James 4:2

James 4:2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

4:2 This verse consists of several short statements; there was no punctuation in ancient Greek, and various translations connect the statements in different ways. ESVSB

4:2 The punctuation of this verse is uncertain. There is an intended two or threefold parallelism. The thrust of the verse is that we desire things which we cannot obtain so we resort to violent acts in order to get them instead of asking God and trusting in His provision. - Utley

Lust .. greed, here. This term means "to desire," "to set one's heart upon something." That something can be good or evil. Usually in the NT the term has a negative connotation. - Utley

murder .. James may be referring metaphorically to extreme anger or hatred (Matthew 5:21-22; 1 John 3:15). The Greek term used here could reflect a person's tendency toward anger; such a person is on the verge of murder. - FSB

Some of James's readers might have followed the Jewish Zealot movement and engaged in **murder** to benefit their cause. Hostile attitudes and violent methods do not provide satisfaction—you can't get what you want by them. - NLTSB

covet ... (Gk. *zelos*, "jealousy" James 3:14) which leads to the terrible wars and infighting in the church. - ESVSB

fight and war ..

do not ask .. True joy, peace, happiness, meaning, hope, and fulfillment in life come only from God. Unbelievers, however, are unwilling to **ask** for them on His terms—they refuse to submit to God or acknowledge their dependence on Him. - MSB

Prayerlessness results in failure to receive many of God's blessings. - ESVSB
James does not imply that God wills to grant sinful, selfish desires (James 4:3), but bringing requests before God can have a purifying influence on one's desires. - ESVSB

ask .. Un-Christlike motives and lack of prayer are two reasons why Christians often experience unfruitful lives. Often we use prayer as an attempt to obtain our will, not God's. - Utley

÷Jas_4:3
James 4:3

James 4:3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

4:2–3 "ask" Un-Christlike motives and lack of prayer are two reasons why Christians often experience unfruitful lives. Often we use prayer as an attempt to obtain our will, not God's. In this attitude the worst thing that God could do for us would be to answer our self-centered prayers! - Utley

you ask wrongly .. Not all prayers are pleasing to God, only those consistent with his will as revealed in Scripture (cf. 1 John 5:14-15). - ESVSB

amiss .. (lit., "evilly" or "amiss," *kakos*).

pleasures .. Rather than seeking to honor God and advance his kingdom purposes, such prayers seek only to gratify self-centered **passions** (Gk. *hedone*, see note on v. 1) or desires. James is not saying all pleasure is wrong (cf. Genesis 1:31; Psalms 16:11; Psalms 84:1-4, Psalms 84:10-12; 1 Timothy 6:17), only pleasure that does not have the glory of God as the goal (1 Corinthians 10:31). - ESVSB

÷Jas_4:4
James 4:4

James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Adulterers .. terms are for spiritual here.

Adulterers and adulteresses .. A metaphorical description of spiritual unfaithfulness (cf. Matthew 12:39; Matthew 16:4; Mark 8:38). It would have been especially familiar to James' Jewish readers, since the OT often describes unfaithful Israel as a spiritual harlot (cf. 2 Chronicles 21:11-13; Jeremiah 2:20; Jeremiah 3:1, Jeremiah 3:6-9; Ezekiel 16:26-29; Hosea 1:2; Hosea 4:15; Hosea 9:1). James has in view professing Christians, outwardly associated with the church, but holding a deep affection for the evil world system. - MSB

Ye adulterers and adulteresses - These words are frequently used to denote those who are faithless towards God, and are frequently applied to those who forsake God for idols, Hosea 3:1; Isaiah 57:3, Isaiah 57:7; Ezekiel 16:23. It is not necessary to suppose that the apostle meant that those to whom he wrote were literally guilty of the sins here referred to; but he rather refers to those who were unfaithful to their covenant with God by neglecting their duty to him, and yielding themselves to the indulgence of their own lusts and passions. - Barnes

μοιχαλίδες, "adulteresses," i. e. "renegades to your vows." God is the husband to whom the Christian is joined as wife. The figure arose with reference to Israel as the wife of Jahveh; cf. Isaiah 54:5, Jeremiah 3:20, Ezekiel 16:23, Hosea 9:1, Wisd. 3:16, Matthew 12:39, Matthew 16:4, Mark 8:38; and see Heb. Lex. s. v. æÈðÈä.

To this corresponds the position of the church as the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:1, 2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:24-28, Revelation 19:7, Revelation 21:9). The term is often, as here, applied to individual members of the people of God; cf. Exodus 34:15, Numbers 15:39, Psalms 73:27

friendship . . Appearing only here in the NT, the Gr. word describes love in the sense of a strong emotional attachment. - MSB

Friendship . . James uses this prophetic imagery (see, e.g., Jeremiah 3:6; Hosea 3:1) because his readers were seeking what *friendship with the world* could give them—social acceptance (James 2:1-4), prestige (James 3:1), or wealth (James 4:13). Divided loyalty toward God (James 4:8) is like adultery against one's spouse. - NLTSB

> Such people have chosen **friendship with the world** by imitating worldly ways of thinking and worldly activities, making them enemies **of God**. It will always be impossible to satisfy the expectations of unbelievers, whose hearts are set on this world (1 John 2:15-16; 1 John 5:19), and at the same time please God (Galatians 1:10; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 John 3:13). Cf. also Matthew 6:24; James often alludes to the teaching of Jesus (see chart), which is not surprising if he was Jesus' earthly brother. - ESVSB

whoever wishes to be a friend . . The inference is not a mere repetition, but lays stress on the fact that the mere wish and inclination to be on one side involves, *ipso facto*, antagonism to the other. - CBSC

friend .. In the ancient world, ***friend*** was used as a title for special and exclusive relationships (Luke 23:12, Herod and Pilate; John 19:12, Pilate as "friend of Caesar"; see also 1 Maccabees 2:18; 1 Maccabees 6:28 RSVA). Both Moses (Exodus 33:11) and Abraham were called friends of God (James 2:23; 2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; cp. John 15:15). - NLTSB

world .. The *world* consists of society that is opposed to ***God*** and his kingdom. The world is guided by earthly wisdom, not heavenly (James 3:15-17), and is characterized by evil desires, fighting, and killing (James 4:2-3). - NLTSB

÷Jas_4:5
James 4:5

James 4:5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

the Scritpure says .. **ἡ γραφὴ λέγει**. The citation which follows is from an unknown source, but the form in

which it is made gives the words an authority equal to that of the O.T. - CBSC

Resch (*Agrapha*, log. 54, p. 256) supposes that this passage is strictly parallel to Galatians 5:17. - CBSC

Verse five presents two problems to the interpreter. The first is that James introduces a quotation with the words, "**Scripture says,**" but the words that follow are not found anywhere in the Bible. Some have suggested they come from a lost book that James considered Scripture. - CPNT

The most likely explanation is that James is not quoting directly from Scripture in verse five but is paraphrasing one or more Old Testament verses. One cannot know which verses he paraphrases until one understands the meaning of verse 5b. That is the second problem with interpreting this verse. - CPNT

Scripture .. James summarizes one of the messages of Scripture - NLTSB

Scripture .. not found as such in the OT; it is a composite of general OT teaching. MSB

Scripture .. James probably has in mind the general OT teaching about God's jealousy for his people (Exodus 20:5). - NIVZSB

years jealously .. It is very difficult to translate this statement, but the best rendering seems to be something such as the following. "***God jealously longs for the spirit that He made to live in us."*** Another translations is, ***"the Spirit which he made to dwell in us jealously yearns for the entire devotion of the heart***" (cf. Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:30; John 7:39; John 16:7).164

Both translations fit the preceding context well. God's people who love the world have committed spiritual adultery against Him (v. 4), but God (or His Spirit) jealously longs for their love (v. 5).

Furthermore these translations accurately represents the Greek text. The phrase *pros phthonon* literally means "to envy," but it is also an adverbial idiom meaning "jealously."165 The verb *epipothei* means "to long for" or "to yearn for" rather than "to tend toward." - Constable

The spirit .. envy .. Very difficult to translate this verse. One of the most difficult in the book. See NIV, see NASB. See **ESV** for a good translation.
Quest: What spirit? HS or man's.
Envy, here good or bad?

The Spirit … yearns jealously .. This difficult phrase is best understood by seeing the "spirit" as a reference not to the Holy Spirit, but to the human spirit, - MSB

spirit which he caused .. This statement is not found in the OT, suggesting that James could be summarizing several OT passages (compare Matthew 2:23; John 7:38; Ephesians 5:14).

This reference to a spirit could be pointing to the human spirit that God placed in humanity at creation (Genesis 2:7). If so, the passage would indicate that God longs jealously for the loyalty and devotion of the human spirit. Alternatively, the passage could be referring to a human spirit that is prone to jealousy and sinful desires—the spirit representing the evil impulse in a person (Genesis 6:5; Genesis 8:21) that leads to the conflicts discussed in James 4:1-2. However, this interpretation portrays the dwelling of the evil spirit to be an act of God. Another possibility is that James is describing the Holy Spirit; this interpretation is unlikely, however, as it would be the only reference to the Holy Spirit in the entire letter. - FSB

Jealousy .. ..the Greek word for jealousy (*phthonos,* verb form *epipotheō*) is never used in the New Testament or in the Greek Old Testament to describe God (a different word is used in Deuteronomy 32:16; Deuteronomy 32:21). Only humans, not God, can commit the sin of jealousy or envy.

See *BKC* and *BBC* for an extended discussion of the problem and possible solutions. *Utley* discusses in detail the problems with this verse.

See Flavil Nichols, pp 355-358. Difficult Texts of the New Testament Explained, edited by Wendell

Winkler, (The Fourth Annual "Fort Worth" Lectures, the Brown Trail Church of Christ, Bedfort, TX) 1981.

ESV "Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"?

Proverbs 21:10; Proverbs 3:34;

÷Jas_4:6
James 4:6

James 4:6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "GOD RESISTS THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

James 4:5-6. The views of expositors differ widely in the interpretation of these verses.

But He gives a greater grace .. In respect to mankind's sin problem, which seems to interpret James 4:5 in a negative sense, God gives even more grace (cf. Romans 5:20-21). - Utley

he .. God

gives more grace .. every inceasing grace;

More grace (*meizona charin*). "Greater grace." Greater than what? "Greater grace in view of the greater requirement" (Ropes), like Romans 5:20.

he says .. The quotation here is probably from Proverbs 3:34; as probably Proverbs 21:10 .

God is opposed to the proud .. This is from Proverbs 3:34 in the Septuagint (cf. 1 Peter 5:5-6). The spiritual battle lines have been drawn. The term "proud" comes from two Greek words: "above" and "to show oneself." This relates to the haughty teachers of James 3:14-16. - Utley

resists .. literally, "sets Hmself in array against". JFB

but gives grace to the humble .. This relates to the teachers with godly wisdom of James 3:17-18. It is also a general principle. - Utley

the humble--the unenvious, uncovetous, and unambitious as to the world. Contrast James 4:4. - JFB

÷Jas_4:7
James 4:7

James 4:7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

James 4:7-12 How humility is related to peaceful justice.
In James 4:7-9 a whole series of commands (10 aorist imperatives)

Submit therefore to God .. This is an aorist passive imperative. This is a military term which means "to align oneself under authority" (cf. Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:13). Notice the twin aspects of submission (to God) and resistance (to evil). - Utley

> Therefore, in this warfare, take God's side, place yourself under Him as Captain. - CBSC
>
> The language is taken from warfare. "Submit" as a good soldier puts himself in complete subjection

to his captain. "Resist," stand bravely against. - JFB

submit .. Lit. "to line up under." The word was used of soldiers under the authority of their commander. In the NT, it describes Jesus' submission to His parents' authority (Luke 2:51), submission to human government (Romans 13:1), the church's submission to Christ (Ephesians 5:24), and servants' submission to their masters (Titus 2:9; 1 Peter 2:18). James used the word to describe a willing, conscious submission to God's authority as sovereign ruler of the universe. MSB

Resist the devil .. This is an aorist active imperative. This is literally "take a stand against" (cf. Ephesians 6:13; 1 Peter 5:9). - Utley

he will flee from you .. Satan will flee before God's provision (cf. Ephesians 6:11-18) and our faith, but only for a season (cf. Luke 4:13). - Utley

He will flee .. Or, *he shall flee.* "The Devil," says the strange old book called *The Shepherd of Hermas,* "can fight, but he cannot conquer; if, therefore, thou dost withstand him, he will flee from thee, beaten and ashamed." - Ellicott

Resist the devil and he will flee from you .. The flip side of the first command. "**Resist**" literally means "take your stand against." All people are either under the lordship of Christ or the lordship of Satan (John 8:44; Ephesians 2:2; 1 John 3:8; 1 John 5:19); there is no middle ground. Those who transfer their allegiance from Satan to God will find that Satan "**will flee from**" them; he is a defeated foe. - MSB

÷Jas_4:8
James 4:8

James 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded.

ἁμαρτωλοί … δίψυχοι. Those addressed in this paragraph are either worldly men outside the Christian brotherhood, or else those of the brethren who had become worldly. Laughter and joy are now characteristic of them. - Exp-Gk

Draw near to God .. This is an aorist active imperative. This verse reflects OT regulations for the priests that now are applicable to all believers (cf. Exodus 19:22). - Utley

Draw near .. The concept of drawing near to God was associated originally with the Levitical priests (Exodus 19:22; Leviticus 10:3; Ezekiel 44:13), but eventually came to describe anyone's approach to God (Psalms 73:28; Isaiah 29:13; Hebrews 4:16; Hebrews 7:19; Hebrews 10:22) - MSB

Draw nigh to God--So "cleave unto Him," Deuteronomy 30:20, namely, by prayerfully (James 4:2-3) "resisting Satan," who would oppose our access to God. - JFB

Draw near to God .. Because the church was fractured and needed healing, James calls the community to collectively approach God.

Here, James draws on OT language of sacrifice (Leviticus 10:3; Leviticus 21:21-23), as the Septuagint (the ancient Greek OT) uses the term engizo ("to draw near") to describe the priest offering sacrifices in the temple. - FSB

Come close to God .. This is the language of friendship (James 2:23) and loyalty (James 1:6-8). - NLTSB

Cleanse your hands. Of evil doing.- PNT
Cleanse .. . hands--the outward instruments of action. - JFB

to cleanse, from dirt in a ritual sense (Exodus 30:19-21; Mark 7:3, Mark 7:19). Here it is figurative, as in Isaiah 1:16; Psalms 24:4. - RWP

Cleanse your hands, you sinners .. This is another aorist active imperative. (cf. Psalms 24:3-6; Isaiah 1:16). Notice that James calls believers "sinners"! This is OT metaphor that relates to the ceremonial purification worship rites for OT priests (cf. Exodus 30:17-21; Ezekiel 44:15). It became an OT idiom for the turning from and removal of sin (cf. Psalms 24:4; Psalms 26:6). The "hand" becomes a revealer of the "heart." - Utley

Purify (ἁγνίσατε) One of the three instances in the New Testament in which the word is not used of *ceremonial* purification. The others are 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:3. - VWS

Purify your hearts. Of evil thoughts. - PNT
purify .. . hearts--literally "make chaste" of your spiritual adultery (James 4:4, that is, worldliness) "your hearts": the inward source of all impurity. - JFB

double-minded--divided between God and the world. The "double-minded" is at fault in heart; the sinner in his hands likewise. - JFB

ye double minded; the persons addressed are not the profane men of the world, but sinners in Zion, formal professors, hypocritical persons; who speak with a double tongue to men, - Gill

÷Jas_4:9
James 4:9

James 4:9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom.

Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning .. These are four aorist imperatives (the first three are aorist active and the last one aorist passive). Collectively they refer to the need for spiritual mourning over sin like Matthew 5:3-9. This is a Hebraic way of referring to a repentant attitude and lifestyle (i.e., Isaiah 32:11-12). - Utley

Be afflicted--literally, "Endure misery," that is, mourn over your wretchedness through sin. Repent with deep sorrow instead of your present laughter. - JFB

Lament .. Be afflicted, wretched, and miserable. This is the state of those truly broken over their sin. - MSB

mourn .. weep .. ***Mourning*** is the inner response to such brokenness. **weep**. The outward manifestation of inner sorrow over sin (cf. Mark 14:72). - MSB

Grieve, mourn and wail .. James uses language from the OT prophets to exhort his readers to repent sincerely for sin (e.g., Joel 2:12; cf. 1 Corinthians 5:2). - NIVZSB

laughter .. Used only here in the NT, the word signifies the flippant laughter of those foolishly indulging in worldly pleasures. The picture is of people who give no thought to God, life, death, sin, judgment, or holiness. James calls on such people to mourn over their sin (cf. Luke 18:13-14). - MSB

Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness; meaning their carnal joy, on account of their friendship with the world, and their enjoyment of the things of it, since they consumed them on their lusts, and which betrayed enmity to God. - Gill

gloom .. (heaviness) εἰς κατήφειαν, 'to heaviness,' R.V., or dejection, κατήφεια, defined to be a mixture of shame and grief, lit. with downcast eye, perhaps from κατά and φάος,- CBSC

÷Jas_4:10
James 4:10

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Humble .. "Humble" comes from a word meaning "to make oneself low." Those conscious of being in the presence of the majestic, infinitely holy God are humble (cf. Isaiah 6:5).- MSB

It is the **humble** whom God will exalt (cf. Matthew 23:12 par.; Luke 1:52; Luke 14:11; Luke 18:14; 1 Peter 5:6). But as long as people exalt themselves, God will not exalt them. - ESVSB
Possibly an OT allusion to **Isaiah 57:15.**

Humble yourselves .. This exhortation parallels the call to "submit yourselves … to God" (James 4:7) that began this series of commands. - NIVZSB

in the sight of the Lord .. This is a Hebrew idiom for (1) a worship service (cf. Deuteronomy 33:10); or (2) the Lord's personal knowledge (cf. Genesis 19:13; Judges 18:6). Since this is not a worship service setting but an emphasis on a repentant attitude, #2 fits best. - Utley

lift you up .. See James 1:9; Matthew 23:12; Luke 14:11; 1 Peter 5:6. NIVZSB

Submission to God in **humility**, putting Him before self ... always results in God lifting one up both immediately and eventually. Since this is the condition in which God can use us, He will proceed to do so for His glory (cf. Matthew 23:12; Luke 14:11; Luke 18:14; 1 Peter 5:6). - Constable

God is OPPOSED TO and may even punish THE PROUD. But divine favor and personal motivation (GRACE) are given TO THE **HUMBLE** (Proverbs 3:34). MBC

"and He will exalt you" This also is an idiom meaning

1. God will raise up your spirit and give you joy
2. God will exalt you among your peers (cf. James 4:11-12; Matthew 23:12)
3. physical safety (cf. Job 5:11; Job 22:29)

÷Jas_4:11
James 4:11

James 4:11 Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a 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.

Law of James 2:8

Do not speak evil .. fault finding, slander (NIV). Why is speaking evil about a brother the same as speaking evil of the royal law of love?

speak evil .. This means to slander or defame. James does not forbid confronting those in sin, which is elsewhere commanded in Scripture (Matthew 18:15-17; Acts 20:31; 1 Corinthians 4:14; Colossians 1:28; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:15; Titus 3:10). Rather, he condemns careless, derogatory, critical, slanderous accusations against others (cf. Exodus 23:1; Psalms 50:20; Psalms 101:5; Psalms 140:11; Proverbs 26:20; Proverbs 11:9; Proverbs 16:28; Proverbs 17:9; Proverbs 26:20; Romans 1:29; 2 Corinthians 12:20; Ephesians 4:31; 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 2:3; Titus 3:2). - MSB

speak evil .. The misuse of the tongue to **speak evil** or to slander others. Speaking ill of others is the result of all the arrogant boasting (James 3:5), jealousy (vv. James 4:14, James 4:16), self-centered desires (James 4:1, 3), and pride (v. James 4:6) that James is warning against. Such slanderous conduct is decried in both the OT (Leviticus 19:16; Psalms 50:20; Jeremiah 6:28) and NT (Romans 1:30; 2 Corinthians 12:20; 1 Peter 2:1). -

ESVSB

slander one another .. James again brings up the problem of sinful speech (James 1:26; James 3:1-12). - NIVZSB

against each other .. (NLT) This exhortation for peace in the Christian community requires that Christians not slander each other. Slandering one's neighbor is the same as slandering God's law, because the law prohibits slander and demands love for one's neighbor (James 2:8; Leviticus 19:16-18; Matthew 7:1-5). NLTSB

brethren ..

evil of a brother .. The law requires that people love their brothers and sisters in Christ. To **speak evil** against them violates the kingdom command to love (see note on James 2:8). - FSB

speaks evil of a brother … speaks evil of the law .. Those who speak evil of other believers set themselves up as judges and condemn them (cf. James 2:4). They thereby defame and disregard God's law, which expressly forbids such slanderous condemnation. - MSB

judges his brother ..

speaks evil of the law .. judges it .. Believers who criticize each other ignore the law and, in effect, think they are superior to it. James probably refers again to the "royal law" (see James 2:8 and note) since Leviticus 19:16 (just two verses away from the love command of Leviticus 19:18) prohibits slander. - NIVZSB

judges the law .. By refusing to submit to the law, slanderers place themselves above it as its judges. - MSB

judges the law .. The "law" likely refers to these OT laws against slander, particularly Leviticus 19:16, which leads to Leviticus 19:18, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," which James calls "the royal law" (James 2:8). Yet it also includes in a broader sense Jesus' kingdom laws regarding love for neighbor (Matthew 22:39) and for one another (John 13:34-35; John 15:12; John 15:17). Those who inappropriately judge others (Matthew 7:1-5; Romans 2:1; 1 Corinthians 4:5) break God's law and show contempt for God. - ESVSB

not a doer of the law ...

but a judge ..

;Jas_4:12
James 4:12

James 4:12 There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

one Lawgiver .. God, who gave the law (cf. Isaiah 33:22). He alone has the authority to save those who repent from its penalty, and destroy those who refuse to repent. - MacArthur Study Bible

When a person begins to "judge the law," he is usurping the place of the **one lawgiver and judge**. God alone gave the law, and he alone is judge of all (Psalms 9:19; Isaiah 2:4; Joel 3:12). - ESVSB

There is one Lawgiver .. The NT teaches us not to judge (Matthew 7:1) for God is the ultimate Judge and the One who will take vengeance on those who practice evil (Romans 12:9; Hebrews 10:30). Yet the Scriptures also exhort the church to exercise judgment over its members (1 Corinthians 6:2-5). This type of judgment is corporate discipline exercised in accordance with biblical truths and the pattern in Matthew 18:15-20. - NNIBC

one Lawgiver and Judge .. "Lawgiver" is a compound noun used only here in the New Testament (*nomothetes*, from *nomos*, "law," and *tithemi*, "to set, place, constitute, or lay down"). God not only authored the Law; He also administrates the Law. He serves as both the executive and judicial branches of the divine government. God is King; He institutes and declares His Law. God is Judge; He upholds and enforces His Law. - BKC

able to save and destroy .. Possibly an implicit message to the divisive boasters, warning them of future judgment. - ESVSB

One who is able to save and to destroy .. This phrase is often used of God the Father (cf. Matthew 10:28; Luke 12:4-5). In the OT all causality is attributed to YHWH. This was a theological way of asserting monotheism (cf. Deuteronomy 32:39; 1 Samuel 2:6-7; 2 Kings 5:7). - Utley

Who are you to judge another .. Those who judge others adopt a role that belongs to God alone (Genesis 18:25; Psalms 82:1, Psalms 82:8; Romans 3:6; Hebrews 12:23). FSB

"We must be careful to note the far-reaching consequences of James' teaching here: respect for law and order is necessary (as we are often told) for the health of modern society, - Constable

James was speaking of **judging** other people without divine authorization to do so. Obviously God has delegated the responsibility of **judging** some civil acts to human governments, - Constable

Romans 2:1

Jas_4:13
James 4:13

James 4:13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit";

v.13-17 Don't Leave God Out Of Your Life

v.13 .. Planning
* scheduled time .. today or tomorrow
* selected place
* set time for regeneration (?)
* seize diligently your task
* shrewdly maintained objective

Come now. . The Greek phrase used here aims to gain the audience's attention heading into a serious discussion. - FSB

you who say .. Probably believers (see James 4:15). NIVZSB

Today or tomorrow .. James does not condemn wise business planning, but rather planning that leaves out God. The people so depicted are practical atheists, living their lives and making their plans as if God did not exist. - MSB

buy and sell .. Itinerant merchants depended on personal assertiveness as a solution to their poverty and low social status. James urges greater recognition of God's providence and warns against arrogantly planning events which one cannot really control. - NLTSB

buy and sell .. The section is very interesting as giving a picture of the commercial *Diaspora*-Jew. The Jews of the Dispersion had, from the outset, to give up agricultural pursuits; since for the most part they

congregated in the cities it was commerce in which they engaged chiefly. A good instance of the *Diaspora*-Jew going from city to city occurs in Josephus, *Antiq.*, xii. 2–5 - Exp-Gr

buy and sell .. Others point out how the dispersed Jews were given to be traders and accumulated a great wealth in such business. [With these dispersed Jews becoming rich and sending a tithe to the temple in Jerusalem, the city became a wealthy rival of Rome and the Jews envied for their success. See the book of ***Revelation chapters 17 and 18.*** WG***]***

make a profit .. On the surface this sounds like good business sense, but it masks a secular worldview that ignores God. These people are probably Christians belonging to the wealthy merchant class, whereas the rich people mentioned in James 5:1-6 are probably not believers (cf. James 2:6-7). - ESVSB

The person in James' illustration was probably a travelling Jewish merchant, ". .. the materialist core of the contemporary bourgeois prosperity."170 Jewish merchants were common in the culture of James' day, and undoubtedly some of them were Christian Jews. The man's plans were not wrong in themselves. - Constable

:Jas_4:14
James 4:14

James 4:14 whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

Must take into account one's vulnerability and dependence on God.
Without God our future is uncertain.
How receive assistance from God?
Through prayer - Romans 8:27
Through HS guidance - Proverbs 3:5-6

We need to make right choices. - Luscombe

you .. These business people think they control events but fail to recognize God's providential control and the temporary nature of **life**, which is like a **mist** that can fade away at any moment. Planning and investing are not wrong, but arrogant self-confidence and boasting are. - ESVSB

know what will happen .. Proverbs 27:1. James exposes the presumptuous folly of the practical atheists he condemned in v. 13—those who do not know what the future holds for them (cf. Luke 12:16-21). God alone knows the future (cf. Isaiah 46:9-10). - MSB

what will happen tomorrow .. James condemns rich business owners for their arrogant self-confidence; he accuses them of acting as though they alone determine the course of their lives, apart from God (Proverbs 27:1; Luke 12:16-20). - FSB

As vapour (*atmis*). This is the answer. Old word for mist (like *atmos*, from which our "atmosphere"), in N.T. only here and Acts 2:19 with *kapnou* (vapour of smoke (from Joel 2:30). - RWP

vapor .. This refers either to a puff of smoke or one's breath that appears for a moment in cold air. It stresses the transitory nature of life (cf. James 1:10; Job 7:6-7; Job 9:25-26; Job 14:1-2; Psalms 39:5; Psalms 39:11; Psalms 62:9; Psalms 89:47; Psalms 90:5-6; Psalms 90:10). - MSB

mist .. Cf. Job 7:7, Job 7:9; Job 7:16; Psalms 39:5-6. James's rebuke may again reflect the teaching of Jesus, who told a parable about a foolish rich man who made plans to earn more money while failing to reckon with the brevity of his own life (Luke 12:15-21). - NIVZSB

Vapor .. (Gk. atmis) is used of smoke (Acts 2:19), incense (Ezekiel 8:11), and of steam. It makes no

difference which one is chosen, for all are transient and gone in a moment. Compared to eternity, the span of our lives appears insignificant. - NNIBC

The frailty and fleetingness of human life is often alluded to in the Bible as:

1. a shadow (cf. Job 8:9; Job 14:2; Psalms 102:11; Psalms 109:23)
2. a breath (cf. Job 7:7-16)
3. a cloud (cf. Job 7:9; Job 30:15)
4. a wild flower (cf. Psalms 103:15; Isaiah 40:6-8; 1 Peter 1:24)
5. vanity or mist (cf. Ecclesiastes 1:2; Ecclesiastes 1:14; Ecclesiastes 2:1; Ecclesiastes 2:11; Ecclesiastes 2:15; Ecclesiastes 2:17; Ecclesiastes 2:19; Ecclesiastes 2:21; Ecclesiastes 2:23; Ecclesiastes 2:26; Ecclesiastes 3:19; Ecclesiastes 4:4; Ecclesiastes 4:7-8; Ecclesiastes 4:16; Ecclesiastes 5:7; Ecc_5:10; 6:2,4,9,22; Ecclesiastes 7:6; Ecclesiastes 7:15; Ecclesiastes 8:10; Ecclesiastes 8:14; Ecclesiastes 9:9; Ecclesiastes 11:8; Ecclesiastes 11:10; Ecclesiastes 12:8). - Utley

+Jas_4:15

James 4:15

James 4:15 Instead you *ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."

Don't leave God Out!

"If God wills" .. was a conventional Greek expression but fit Jewish piety well; it appears elsewhere in the New Testament (e.g., Acts 18:21; 1 Corinthians 16:7).
Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (James 4:15–17).

Lord .. The ***Lord*** has authority over life and death (Deuteronomy 32:39; 1 Samuel 2:6; Matthew 10:28).- NLTSB

If the Lord wills .. The true Christian submits his plans to the lordship of Christ (cf. Proverbs 19:21; Acts 18:21; Acts 21:14; Romans 1:10; Romans 15:32; 1 Corinthians 4:19; 1 Corinthians 16:7). MSB

if the Lord wills .. with "**Lord**" referring to Yahweh as the Creator who sustains the universe and whose will controls all that happens. Every business decision must be based on submission to God's will. - ESVSB

If it is the Lord's will .. Whether verbalized or not, this sense of living within God's will for all of life is basic to authentic Christian living. - NIVZSB

The command does not mean to keep adding the phrase, **If the Lord wills,** to everything a person says. To do such could become another form of pride. At the same time a person's behavior and plans should consistently demonstrate dependence upon the Lord. - NNIBC

+Jas_4:16

James 4:16

James 4:16 But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

.. your thinking, attitude!

Have mind of Christ 1 Corinthians 2:16; Philippians 2:25; Romans 12:2;

... out of our Actions.
v. 17 good = beautiful, expressing godly beauty in your life.
Therefore it is about good deeds and actions.
* Prayer is good - Psalms 73:28

* Thanksgiving - Psalms 92:1

boast .. Christians may **boast** about what God has done (James 1:9-10), but not about their own arrogant plans, which assume that God has no claim or authority over their lives. - NLTSB

To make sure his readers understood, James reiterated that to **boast and brag… is evil.** Self-centered bragging must be replaced by God-honoring trust. The cure for boasting is belief. - BKC

boasting .. Arrogant bragging about their anticipated business accomplishments (see note on v. 13). - MSB

Boast .. could be translated "rejoice." The noun, **boastings** (Gk. alazoneia), connotes vain pretensions. A man who brags about future plans while ignoring God's sovereignty is foolish, but more than that his attitude is **evil.** The extent of this marks the depravity of contemporary society. - NNIBC

÷Jas_4:17
James 4:17

James 4:17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it,* to him it is sin.

... out of our Actions.
v. 17 good = beautiful, expressing godly beauty in your life.
Therefore it is about good deeds and actions.
* Prayer is good - Psalms 73:28
* Thanksgiving - Psalms 92:1

Remember ..: This verse is probably a maxim that James expected his readers to recognize. Its source is unknown, but it is consistent with the teaching of Scripture (cp. Deuteronomy 24:15; Proverbs 3:27-28; Matthew 25:41-46; Luke 12:47). - NLTSB

Fails to do it .. describes what are commonly called "sins of omission." It is not only what people do that matters; the good that they fail to do is equally important to God. - ESVSB

To him that knoweth to do good. The connection of thought is probably as follows: "I have warned you that such boasting is wrong, and that the right way is to speak submissively (as in James 4:15). If you know how to do the right and yet do it not the sin is the greater on account of your knowledge." - PNT

sin .. The implication is that they also did what they shouldn't do. Sins of omission lead directly to sins of commission. - MSB

Sin .. is not only doing what God forbids (sins of "commission"); it is also failing to do what God asks us to do (sins of "omission"). - NIVZSB

÷Jas_5:1
James 5:1

James 5:1 Come now, *you* rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon *you!*

Self Indulgence

you rich people .. It is unclear whether these rich people are inside or outside the church. Only those inside the congregation would have had an opportunity to hear James' message. However, unlike in other passages, James does not call the rich to repent or refer to them as "brothers" (e.g., James 1:2, James 1:16; James 1:19; James 2:1; James 2:5; James 2:14), possibly implying that he is addressing outsiders. - FSB

rich .. James condemns them not for being wealthy, but for misusing their resources. Unlike the believing rich in Timothy's congregation (1 Timothy 6:17-19), these are the wicked wealthy who profess Christian faith and have associated themselves with the church, but whose real god is money. For prostituting the goodness and generosity of God, they can anticipate only divine punishment (v. 5). - MSB

you rich .. This refers either to (1) rich believers as in James 1:10 or (2) exploiting unbelievers (cf. James 2:1-13). Wealth has its unique temptations and problems (cf. Matthew 6:2-4; Matthew 6:19-34; Luke 6:24; 1 Timothy 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 6:17). - Utley

> To fully understand this text two aspects of wealth must be understood: (1) the Jews considered wealth to be an evidence of God's acceptance and blessing (cf. Deuteronomy 28:1-13), but they ignored the contextual covenantal responsibilities and warnings (cf. Deuteronomy 27:15-26), and (2) the wealthy Jews were often the very ones who persecuted the early Christians.
>
> It is uncertain whether the ones referred to are wealthy Jews or worldly believers. They were expecting God's blessing, but not so, judgment (cf. Isaiah 13:6). They had fattened themselves for judgment (cf. James 5:5; Jeremiah 12:3; Jeremiah 25:34). - Utley

The rich men who are here addressed are outside 'the brotherhood.' This appears clearly both from the character of the address and from the acts ascribed to them, - CBSC

ye rich .. who have neglected the true enjoyment of riches, which consists in doing good. James intends this address to rich Jewish unbelievers, not so much for themselves, as for the saints, that they may bear with patience the violence of the rich (James 5:7), knowing that God will speedily avenge them on their oppressors. - JFB

Weep and howl (κλαύσατε ὀλολύζοντες) Lit., *weep, howling.* The latter is a descriptive word, ὀλολύζω ol-ol-uz-o. Only here in New Testament, and denoting a more demonstrative and passionate expression of grief than weeping. - VWS

weep .. This is an aorist active imperative, which speaks of urgency. It refers to eschatological judgment. In James 4:9-10 these commands are related to a call to repentance and humility like Matthew 5:3-9; but this section, James 5:1-12, relates to the Second Coming and Judgment Day. - Utley

weep and howl .. Prophetic language for those under indictment by God when the day of the Lord arrives (e.g., Isaiah 13:6; Isaiah 15:3; Hosea 7:14; Amos 8:3) - ESVSB

howl .. This is a present active participle used in an imperatival sense. This term is used in the OT to describe the pain of certain judgment (cf. Isaiah 13:6; Isaiah 14:31; Isaiah 15:2-3; Isaiah 16:7; Isaiah 23:1; Isaiah 23:14; Isaiah 65:14). - Utley

miseries (ταλαιπωρίαις) .. Only here and Romans 3:16. - VWS

which are coming upon you.. This is a present middle participle. This shows the certainty of God bringing mankind to account for their plans as well as their actions! This judgment is not only the future

(eschatological) but also present (temporal). We reap what we sow (cf. Galatians 6:7-8).

miseries that are coming .. Referring to final judgment, rather than the miseries of this life. - ESVSB

Exhortations to **weep and howl** were a graphic prophetic way of saying: You will have reason to weep and howl (Joel 1:8; Micah 1:8; cf. James 4:9). - IVPBBCNT

Jas_5:2
James 5:2

James 5:2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes .. James uses a prophetic vocabulary. Beginning in verse two, he speaks of God's future judgment in the past tense (the "prophetic perfect tense"). His condemnation of the rich is so sure, it is as if it has already happened. - College Press NT

Your richest goods are ruined .. says James, "your hoard of clothes is moth-eaten; your gold and silver are tarnished. Yes, their very tarnish will be the evidence of your wicked hoarding and you will shrink from them as if they were red-hot" - BBC

The **wealth** and **fine clothes** are so excessive that they deteriorate from lack of use; their destruction is a sign of the anticipated judgment. - NLTSB

Riches, garments, and **gold** sum up the sumptuous, materialistic lifestyle of these landowners. These things will not only be lost forever but will be evidence at their final trial before God and will feed the very flames of the lake of fire, where they will spend eternity (Revelation 20:11-15). - ESVSB

garments .. In the ancient world food, costly **garments,** and precious metals were conspicuous signs of wealth. James pronounces judgment and destruction on all three. - NNIBC

garments .. . moth-eaten--referring to Matthew 6:19-20. - JFB

> James speaks of wealth in four forms: **riches, garments**, gold, and silver. In Bible times, wealth was generally in the form of grain, oil, and other produce: clothing, gold, and silver. Perhaps when James says **"Your riches are corrupted,"** he means that the grain had become wormy and the oil had become rancid. The point is that these things had been hoarded to the point where they were spoiled. They could have been used at one time to feed the hungry; now they were worthless. **"Your garments are moth-eaten,"** he says. This doesn't happen to clothing that is in regular use. But when the closet is so crowded with garments that they are used very infrequently, they are subject to moth damage. To James it is morally wrong to hoard clothes like this when so many people in the world are in desperate need. - BBC

Jas_5:3
James 5:3

James 5:3 Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days.

Your gold and silver are cankered .. Rusted from disuse. These metals do not literally rust, but do tarnish from long disuse. The idea is that they show they have been hoarded, not used. - PNT

Your gold and your silver .. There were three sources of wealth in the ancient world: (1) stored food; (2) clothing; and (3) precious metals. All three types of wealth are described by the perfect tense verbal forms denoting their complete and ongoing destruction: "rotted," "moth-eaten," and "rusted" (cf. Matthew 6:19-20). - Utley

a witness against you .. The wealth of the rich is described as testifying in court against those who use their possessions and power to oppress the poor. - FSB

[**Gold, silver,** etc] .. will stand as evidence against them because it was unjustly gotten (James 5:4) and wickedly used (James 5:5-6). - NLTSB

These things will not only be lost forever but will be **evidence** at their final trial before God and will feed the very flames of the lake of **fire**, where they will spend eternity (Revelation 20:11-15). - ESVSB

consume your flesh like fire .. Fire is often used as a symbol of God's judgment. Here it is related to the form of destruction that can happen to accumulated earthly wealth. Humans think that wealth will protect them and help them, but it may well cause their destruction (cf. Luke 12:15-21; Luke 16:19-31). - Utley

You have stored up treasure .. This phrase may mean that the rich have stored up treasures in the form of God's wrath (Romans 2:5). - FSB

the last days .. The last days of that Jewish economy was about to end with the destruction of the temple. It brought a time of great peril to all Jews throughout the Roman Empire. - WG

the last days .. For Christians it relates to the period from the birth of Jesus until His Second Coming. In God's plan (cf. Acts 2:23; Acts 3:18; Acts 4:28; Acts 13:29) the Messiah comes twice, once as Savior (cf. John 3:14-21) and later as Judge (cf. John 5:22; John 5:27; John 9:39; Acts 10:42; Acts 17:31). The last days refer to this period between the incarnation (God becoming a human) and the *Parousia* (Second Coming). - Utley

[The classic Christian interpretation of "the last days" but in context of the OT prophets, etc. it refers to the "last days" of Mosaic covenant dispensation, which end was consummated with the end of the temple, all temple rituals, and the destruction of all their genealogical records. - WG]

÷Jas_5:4
James 5:4

James 5:4 Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

wages that were held back by you .. Workers expected to be paid following a day's work. They probably needed these wages to purchase food for themselves and their families. The law forbade Israelites from withholding wages from workers (Leviticus 19:13; Deuteronomy 24:15; Malachi 3:5). - FSB

wages … you kept back .. The rich had gained some of their wealth by oppressing and defrauding their day laborers—a practice strictly forbidden in the OT (cf. Leviticus 19:13; Deuteronomy 24:14-15). - MSB

James may once again have the "royal law" in view (see James 2:8 and note): in the context of the love command (Leviticus 19:18) - NIVZSB

The law of Moses forbade withholding wages, even overnight; if the injured worker cried out to God, God would avenge him (Deuteronomy 24:14-15; cf., e.g., Leviticus 19:13; Proverbs 11:24; Jeremiah 22:13; Malachi 3:5). That the wrong done the oppressed would itself cry out to God against the oppressor was also an Old Testament image (Genesis 4:10). In first-century Palestine, many day laborers depended on their daily wages to purchase food for themselves and their families; withholding money could mean that they would go hungry.

The income absentee landlords received from agriculture was such that the wages they paid workers could not even begin to reflect the profits they accumulated. Although the rich supported public building projects (in return for attached inscriptions honoring them), they were far less inclined to pay sufficient wages to their workers. At least as early as the second century, Jewish teachers suggested that even failing to leave gleanings for the poor was robbing them (based on Leviticus 19:9-10; Leviticus 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:19). - IVPBBCNT

cries out .. This is literally "shrieks." The cries of the exploited believer reach God (i.e., Deuteronomy 24:14-15)! - Utley

cry out .. Possibly an allusion to Abel's blood crying out to God for justice (Genesis 4:10) or to the Israelites

groaning under Egyptian oppression (Exodus 2:23)—both of which were protests voiced against injustice. - FSB

reached the ears .. of the final Judge, who will soon act in response. - ESVSB

has reached the ears of .. The Bible often describes God in human terms: (1) human body parts; (2) human feelings; or (3) human relationships. Humans have no other language than human categories to describe a personal deity. This is called "anthropomorphisms" from the two Greek words *anthrôpos*, meaning man, and *morphç*, meaning form.

This type of language helps us express the biblical world-view that

1. God is a person and that humans made in His image represent "personal" attributes and characteristics. This is why God and mankind can understand and relate to each other.
2. Humans do not ultimately understand God. He is far greater and more majestic than our earth-bound, temporal categories. God has truly revealed Himself and we can trust His revelation, but He has not exhaustively revealed Himself because of the limited capacity and sinfulness of mankind. - Utley

Lord of hosts .. Literally "Lord of armies"; conveys an image of God as a commander of a great army of angels going to war against the rich oppressors. - FSB

the LORD of Heaven's Armies .. (1 Samuel 17:45; Psalms 103:20-21; Romans 9:29): This title emphasizes God's power to act when the oppressed cannot. - NLTSB

the Lord of Sabaoth .. An untranslated Gr. word meaning "hosts." The One who hears the cries of the defrauded laborers, James warns, is the Lord of hosts (a name for God used frequently in the OT), the commander of the armies of heaven (angels). The Bible teaches that angels will be involved in the judgment of unbelievers (Matthew 13:39-41; Matthew 13:49; Matthew 16:27; Matthew 25:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8). - MSB

> Some Diaspora Jewish texts (literary texts, amulets, etc.) called God "Lord of Sabaoth," transliterating the Hebrew word for "hosts": the God with vast armies (an epithet especially prominent in the LXX of Isaiah). If it was a bad idea to offend a powerful official, it was thus a much worse idea to secure the enmity of God. - IVPBBCNT

Lord of sabaoth .. Lord, Almighty, Most powerful (could call down judgment)
Sabaoth = host.

of the Lord of Sabaoth .. This is an OT title for deity (*YHWH Sabaoth*), which is used well over 250 times, but not in the Pentateuch (Genesis - Deuteronomy). It is used in the OT in several different senses.

1. To discuss all created things (cf. Genesis 2:1; Nehemiah 9:6; Isaiah 45:12).
2. To describe God in ancient royal categories
   a. palace guards
   b. royal entourage
   c. Israel as the unique people of God (cf. 2 Samuel 7:26-29; Psalms 46:7; Psalms 48:8)
3. To describe God's military aspect
   a. the leader of Israel's army (cf. Exodus 12:41; 1 Samuel 17:45; 1 Sam. 60:12; Psalms 24:8-10; Isaiah 31:4).
   b. the leader of the heavenly angelic army (cf. Joshua 5:14-15; Psalms 147:4; Isaiah 40:26)
4. To describe and refute the ancient Mesopotamian and Canaanite belief that the heavenly lights represented angelic powers to be worshiped and placated (cf. Deuteronomy 4:19; Deuteronomy 17:3; Isaiah 24:21-23; Isaiah 40:26; Jeremiah 8:2).

It is true that angels are depicted as stars (cf. Job 38:7; Judges 5:20 and later Jewish apocalyptic literature), but they are servants of YHWH, not independent powers. - Utley

:Jas_5:5
James 5:5

James 5:5 You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.

pleasure and luxury .. After robbing their workers to accumulate their wealth, the rich indulged themselves in an extravagant lifestyle. "**Pleasure**" has the connotation of wanton pleasure. "**Luxury**" [often] leads to vice when a person becomes consumed with the pursuit of pleasure. - MSB

> **a day of slaughter ..** The rich consumed much meat in a day of slaughter, i.e., at a feast (often at sheep-shearing or harvest; cf. 1 Samuel 25:4, 1 Samuel 25:36); once an animal was slaughtered, as much as possible was eaten at once, because the rest could be preserved only by drying and salting. Meat was generally unavailable to the poor except during public festivals.
>
> The picture here is of the rich being fattened like cattle for the day of their own slaughter (cf., e.g., Jeremiah 12:3; Amos 4:1-3); similar imagery appears in parts of the early apocalyptic work 1 Enoch (94:7–11; 96:8; 99:6). As often in the Old Testament (e.g., Amos 6:4-7), the sin in verse 5 is not exploitation per se (as in v. 4) but a lavish lifestyle while others go hungry or in need. - IVPBBNT

fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter .. Like the cattle in their fields, the rich gorge themselves on luxuries and fail to realize that they are headed for the final slaughter (see Isaiah 30:25; Jeremiah 12:3; Revelation 19:17-21). - ESVSB

a day of slaughter .. Like fattened cattle ready to be slaughtered, the rich that James condemns had indulged themselves to the limit. This is a vivid depiction of divine judgment, in keeping with the metaphor likening the overindulgent rich to fattened cattle. - MSB

:Jas_5:6
James 5:6

James 5:6 You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.

You have condemned .. This refers to the financial and judicial exploitation of widows, orphans, strangers, the poor, and the socially powerless and outcast. God is the defender of the needy and neglected (cf. Deuteronomy 10:18; Deuteronomy 24:17-21; Deuteronomy 26:12; Deuteronomy 27:19).

You have condemned .. The rich may have been taking the poor to court, where they were being declared guilty and possibly condemned to death even though they were innocent. - FSB

condemned ... murdered ... The implication is that the rich were using the courts to commit judicial murder (cf. James 2:6). - MSB

you have murdered .. An employer who withheld a person's wages, resulting in their starvation, may actually have been guilty of murder. See note on James 5:4. - FSB

killed innocent people .. (or *killed the Righteous One*): In this context, the phrase most likely refers to innocent people such as the oppressed laborers in this paragraph rather than to Jesus (cp. Acts 3:14; Acts 7:52). - NLTSB

the innocent one .. Perhaps Jesus, the "innocent," or "righteous," one but probably a paradigmatic righteous person. The OT and Jewish writings regularly condemn rich people for exploiting and indirectly killing the poor (in the Aprocrypha [NRSV] see Sirach 34:26-27: "to take away a neighbor's living is to commit murder; to deprive an employee of wages is to shed blood"; see also James 2:5-7; Psalms 10:8-9; Psalms 37:32; Amos 2:6; Amos 5:12; Micah 2:2; Micah 2:6-9; Micah 3:1-3; Micah 3:9-12; Micah 6:9-16). -

NIVZSB

> Jewish tradition recognized that the wicked plotted against the righteous [e.g., Wisdom 2:19-20 RSVA], as the sufferings of many Old Testament heroes (like David and Jeremiah) showed. Judicial oppression of the poor, repeatedly condemned in the Old Testament, was viewed as murder in later Jewish texts; to take a person's garment or to withhold a person's wages was to risk that person's life. James "the Just" himself was later martyred by the high priest for his denunciations of the behavior of the rich. - IVPBBCNT

the righteous *man* .. Some link this to Jesus (because of the last phrase and Isaiah 53:7), but the context relates it to the suffering children of God, the saints. - Utley

He does not resist .. The righteous person does not avenge himself (Matthew 5:38-42). - ESVSB

he does not resist you .. This is possibly a question expecting a "yes" answer [see the modern translations of (1) *The Twentieth Century New Testament*; (2) Edgar J. Goodspeed; and (3) J. B. Rotherham]. If so, it relates to Matthew 5:39. In this age God's people should not react and retaliate, but they will testify on Judgment Day! - Utley

who do not resist you .. Or *Don't they resist you?* or *Doesn't God oppose you?* or *Aren't they now accusing you before God?* - NLTSB

:Jas_5:7
James 5:7

James 5:7 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.

Therefore .. This shows the relationship of this paragraph to the previous one. Utley

patient .. The word emphasizes patience with people (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:14), not trials or circumstances (as in James 1:3). Specifically, James has in mind patience with the oppressive rich. - MSB

be patient .. This is an aorist active imperative. It is the theme and emphasis of this context (cf. James 1:4). The word is used four times: James 5:7 (twice), 8, and 10. Its basic meaning is "long-suffering." This term is used of God's patience with mankind (cf. Romans 2:4; 1 Peter 3:20), and is also one of the fruits of the Spirit (cf. Galatians 5:22-23). - Utley

be patient .. This is the ultimate resolution for the poor in their economic pressures and for the unjust treatment by the wicked rich (James 5:1-6; see James 2:6-7). Even though the poor have been marginalized and oppressed, they must not give up nor strike out at their oppressors. - NLTSB

until the coming of the Lord" This is literally "until the *Parousia*" which means "presence" and was used of a royal visit. - Utley [See notes on next verse, James 5:8.]

until the coming of the Lord .. Anticipates an end to all exploitation and suffering (Luke 4:16-21; Revelation 21:1-4). Consequently, the oppressed should exercise self-control in their reaction to their oppressors (Romans 12:12; Hebrews 10:30). - FSB

The early and the late rains .. describe the Palestinian climate, in which the autumn rains occur just after sowing and the spring rains just before harvest (Jeremiah 5:24; Joel 2:23). Even though three-fourths of Palestine's rain fell from December to February, these two rains were the most critical. - ESVSB

> Palestine's autumn **rains** came in October and November, and winter rains (roughly three-quarters of the year's rainfall) in December and January. But residents of Syria-Palestine eagerly anticipated the late rains of March and April, which were necessary to ready their late spring and early summer crops. The main wheat harvest there ran from mid-April through the end of May; the barley harvest was in March. The main grain harvest came in

June in Greece, July in Italy. Farmers' families were entirely dependent on good harvests; thus James speaks of the "**precious**" (or "valuable"—NIV) fruit of the earth. - IVPBBCNT

the early and latter rain .. The "**early**" rain falls in Israel during October and November and softens the ground for planting. The "**latter**" rain falls in March and April, immediately before the spring harvest. Just as the farmer waits patiently from the early rain to the latter for his crop to ripen, so must Christians patiently wait for the Lord's return (cf. Galatians 6:9; 2 Timothy 4:8; Titus 2:13). - MSB

:Jas_5:8
James 5:8

James 5:8 You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

Be patient ..

Establish your hearts ...

Establish your hearts. A call for resolute, firm courage and commitment. James exhorts those about to collapse under the weight of persecution to shore up their hearts with the hope of the second coming. - MSB

coming of the Lord ..

the coming of the Lord is near .. The FSB says that first-century believers expected Christ to return in their lifetime, but to says that inspired men taught that is wrong. (Luke 21:28; Romans 13:11-12).

Several "comings" of Christ are mentioned in the scriptures: (1) his first coming from heaven via the virgin birth, Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4; John 6:38; (2) to be baptized by John, Acts 13:34; Matthew 3:13; (3) from the dead, Matthew 28:16-18; (4) unto the apostles, John 14:18, John 14:13; fulfilled, Acts 2; (5) to Saul of Tarsus, 1 Corinthians 15:8; Acts 22:16; (6) to the apostle John on Patmos, Revelation 1:12-18.

However, there is another "coming" of Christ which is yet future. It will be personal (Acts 1:9-11), with the clouds, and visible (Revelation 1:7). At his coming the dead shall be raised (1 Thessalonians 4:16) ; how else could "they which pierced him" see him (Revelation 1:7) ? Both righteous and wicked will be raised the same "hour" (John 5:28-29), and the judgment will be held that same "last day" (John 12:47-48; John 6:39).

Our problem for this study is to ascertain, if possible, to which "coming of the Lord" James 5:8 refers. If it is the second coming, in what way could it have been "nigh" (or ASV: "at hand"), but has not yet occurred, 2,000 years later. - Flavil Nichols, p.350, DTNTE

[WG: To say that James taught Jesus' Second Coming and the final judgment of men was near is to say that James was wrong. Was James inspired? Did he make a mistake being inspired? More likely it meant the Lord was coming in judgment on the Jewish nations!

The phrase "*at the door"* in James 5:9, was used by Jesus in giving the signs of the coming destruction of Jerusalem **Matthew 24:33** **Mark 13:29**. Many commentaries misuse it in application or thinking that James was wrong about the Second Coming being near. cf. 1 Peter 4:7.

1) AD 70, His coming in judgment upon the Jews for their rejection. Matthew 24:27, Matthew 24:30, Matthew 24:44, Matthew 24:39; Mark 13:26-30; Luke 21:20-27; Hebrews 10:37; James 5:8

This brought an end to their nation, the temple, the physical priesthood coming from Levi, the end of animal sacrifices, etc. ("Last days"[of the Jewish dispensation] plural)

2) ***The Resurrection Day*** (His Second Coming, -- Cf. "Last Day" singular) 1 Thessalonians 4:13 ff to 1 Thessalonians 5:11; 1 Corinthians 15:23-24 ff; John 14:1-3;
John 5:28; John 11:24; John 6:39; John 6:40; John 6:44;]

See list of "Some Various Comings of Christ" in note Matthew 24:3

at hand .. a phrase that elsewhere in the N.T. meant the same as "shortly", at a near by time; and other such references meant a very few years. (see notes on Revelation 1:1; Revelation 1:3) - WG

at hand .. The imminency of Christ's return is a frequent theme in the NT (cf. Romans 13:12; Hebrews 10:25; 1 Peter 4:7; 1 John 2:18). - MSB

[It seems to be a preconceived notion with many writers that such language always meant Christ's final return, and not to some other great intervention about to take place. - WG]

Draweth nigh -- " *is* from *engeken,* the same word John the Immerser used to proclaim: "the kingdom of heaven is *at hand"* (Matthew 3:2).

James wrote probably not too long before the destruction of Jerusalem. This was the final event which Jesus has said must transpire before Christians could look for the end. [See note at Matthew 24:30.] - F. Nichols, p.351, DTNTE

:-Jas_5:9
James 5:9

James 5:9 Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

Do not grumble .. sums up the divisive complaining behind **3:1–4:12**. It can be particularly painful in times of suffering when people explode in frustration and turn upon each other. - ESVSB

Do not grumble … the Judge is standing at the door .. James pictured Christ as a judge about to open the doors to the courtroom and convene His court. Knowing that the strain of persecution could lead to grumbling, James cautioned his readers against that sin (Philippians 2:14), lest they forfeit their full reward (2 John 1:8). - MSB

judge .. . before the door--referring to Matthew 24:33. The Greek is the same in both passages, and so ought to be translated here as there, ***"doors,"*** plural. The phrase means "***near at hand"*** (Genesis 4:7), which is the oldest interpretations. The Lord's coming to destroy Jerusalem is primarily referred to; and ultimately, His coming again visibly to judgment. - JFB

near … standing at the door .. The NT consistently views Christ's second coming as imminent (Romans 13:12; Hebrews 10:25; 1 Peter 4:7; Revelation 22:20; cf. Mark 1:15). Now that Jesus' first coming has inaugurated the "last days" (James 5:3), the next event in salvation history will be Christ's return in glory. So every generation of Christians looks expectantly yet patiently for that day to dawn (Titus 2:13). - NIVZSB

Judge .. at the door .. James announces the future coming of the Lord as Judge (James 5:7-9; cp. Isaiah 26:21; Micah 1:3). There will be a day of judgment (James 5:3). God, who gave the law, is the Judge who has the power to save and destroy (James 4:12). - NLTSB

The coming of the Lord may not be immediate, so James exhorts Christians to endure (James 1:4) and wait patiently for Christ's return (James 5:7-8). Christians will receive the crown of eternal life (James 1:12) and reap the harvest of righteousness sown by a life of faithfulness to God (James 3:18). - NLTSB

the Judge is standing right at the door .. The emphasis is on the immediacy - Utley

at the door .. The like phrase we have, **Matthew 24:33** **Mark 13:29**; or it may allude to **Genesis 4:7**.

:-Jas_5:10
James 5:10

James 5:10 My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.

take the prophets .. Cf. Matthew 5:12; Matthew 23:31; Acts 7:52. - NIVZSB

In the name of (*en tōi onomati*). As in Jeremiah 20:9. With the authority of the Lord (Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, p. 198). - RWP

prophets .. The example of the prophets centers on the many who suffered and died (Hebrews 11:32-38) for speaking in the name of the Lord. - ESVSB

suffering and patience .. This verse reflects on Matthew 5:11 and Luke 6:23. - NLTSB

÷Jas_5:11
James 5:11

James 5:11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end ***intended by*** **the Lord--that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.**

who endured .. This is a different word from the one used in James 5:7-10 although it reflects and continues the same emphasis. This word means "voluntary, steadfast endurance" with an emphasis on "remaining under a load." - Utley

blessed who endured .. James returns to a theme from the beginning of his letter (James 1:2-4, James 1:12). - NIVZSB

the perseverance of Job .. Job is the classic example of a man who patiently endured suffering and was blessed by God for his persevering faith. James reassured his readers that God had a purpose for their suffering, just as He did for Job's. Cf. Job 42. - MSB

Job's perseverance .. Job had plenty of questions to bring before God, but he stubbornly persisted in his faithfulness to God (Job 1:21; Job 2:10; Job 16:19-21; Job 19:25-27). - NIVZSB

Job was a man of great endurance .. because he remained faithful to God throughout his hardships (Job 1:20-21; Job 2:9-10) despite his complaints (Job 3:1-26; Job 12:1-3; Job 16:1-3). - NLTSB

the outcome of the Lord .. God eventually restored Job's family and fortune (Job 42:10-17). - FSB

what the Lord finally brought about .. A difficult Greek phrase; can also be translated "*the end [or goal] of the Lord.*" The NIV takes it to refer to the blessings that God showers on Job at the end of the book (Job 42:10-17). The phrase could also refer to the "goal" of a virtuous and patient character that the Lord had in view in Job's sufferings. - NIVZSB

compassionate and merciful .. Remembering the Lord's character is a great comfort in suffering. The Scriptures repeatedly affirm His compassion and mercy (Exodus 34:6; Numbers 14:18; 1 Chronicles 21:13; 2 Chronicles 30:9; Psalms 25:6; Psalms 78:38; Psalms 86:5; Psalms 86:15; Psalms 103:8; Psalms 103:13; Psalms 116:5; Psalms 136:1; Psalms 145:8; Lamentations 3:22; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Micah 7:18; Luke 6:36). - MSB

the Lord is full of compassion and ***is*** **merciful ..** These are two rare forms of the Greek terms for "pity" and "mercy." These same concepts are descriptive titles of God (cf. Exodus 34:6; Nehemiah 9:17; Joel 2:13). James may have been directly alluding to Psalms 103:8 or Psalms 111:4. If God treats us this way, we should treat others the same way (cf. James 5:9). - Utley

÷Jas_5:12
James 5:12

James 5:12 But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and *your* "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.

above all .. Or "especially." As he has done repeatedly in his epistle, James stressed that a person's speech provides the most revealing glimpse of his spiritual condition (cf. James 1:26; James 2:12; James 3:2-11; James 4:11). - MSB

Above all .. may indicate that this begins a three-part conclusion to the letter (vv. 12, 13–18, 19–20). Yet it could also refer back to the sins of the tongue and hence the grumbling of v. 9. - ESVSB

do not swear .. Many modern translations see James 5:12 as an independent unit (NASB, NRSV, NJB, NIV). It is a present active imperative with a negative particle which usually means to stop an act already in process. This does not refer to profanity but to rabbinical oath-taking which asserted the truthfulness of their statement by the flippant use of God's name (this may be another allusion to the Sermon on the Mount, cf. Matthew 5:34-37). They had developed an elaborate system of binding and nonbinding oaths. This is another negative use of the tongue. - Utley

do not swear … any other oath .. As Jesus did before him (Matthew 5:33-36; Matthew 23:16-22), James condemned the contemporary Jewish practice of swearing false, evasive, deceptive oaths by everything other than the name of the Lord (which alone was considered binding). - MSB

do not swear .. It is not entirely clear now **do not swear** is connected with verse 7-11. ... ***Oaths*** were allowed in Israel, but the person was required to fulfill them, especially because they so often involved invoking the name of God (see Leviticus 19:12; Jeremiah 5:2). James's prohibition of oaths builds on Jesus' prohibition in Matthew 5:33-37, and the point in both cases is that one's word should be enough. Still, this does not mean all oaths (e.g., official oaths) are prohibited (cf. Romans 1:9; 2 Corinthians 1:23; Philippians 1:8). (See Jesus' prohibition of oaths in Matthew 23:16-22.) - ESVSB

swear .. Refers to taking oaths, or vows, as a guarantee that a person will follow through on what they promised. Whether Jesus and James prohibit all such oaths or simply ones that might deceive is debated. - NIVZSB

oath .. The law required a person to be true to an oath they had taken (Leviticus 19:12). A person should avoid invoking God's name in an oath that is false. - FSB

never take an oath: Because the churches were having such severe verbal conflicts (James 4:1-3; James 4:11-12), James calls upon them to avoid the pitfalls of deceitful oaths by not using any oaths at all (Matthew 5:33-37). To swear an oath in the name of the Lord was to call upon him to enforce the oath (Genesis 31:53; 1 Kings 8:31-32). - NLTSB

by heaven or earth .. When people swore by heaven or earth they were either feigning reverence while avoiding the use of the divine name, or they were being deceitful with clever verbiage (see Matthew 23:16-22). Peter used an oath deceitfully (Matthew 26:71-73), but Paul used an oath to confirm his assertions (Romans 1:9; 2 Corinthians 1:23), which suggests that the prohibition of oaths is not absolute. - NLTSB

Yes be yes .. Again echoing Jesus (see note on Matthew 5:34), James called for straightforward, honest, plain speech. To speak otherwise is to invite God's judgment. - MSB

so that you may not fall under judgment" The major problem was taking God's name in vain (cf. Exodus 20:7). Our words are significant (cf. Matthew 12:34-37), and we will answer for them (cf. Sirach 23:9-10 RSVA). Believers will also stand before Jesus for evaluation of their deeds, motives, and words (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:10). Christ's death dealt with the sin problem; His Spirit empowers and gifts believers for service; but each of us is responsible for how we have used the gifts and opportunities for ministry. - Utley

See chart in ESVSB at James 5.12 for the corellation between Leviticus 19:12-18 with James 5:12 ff.

:Jas_5:13
James 5:13

James 5:13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.

See Topic Notes "Sermons_Gann" for sermon on
PRAYER - James 5:13-18

[xxx see sermon file on Prayer relating to these verses in Sermons - Gann.top]

1. v.13 "let him pray" .. INDIVIDUAL Prayer
2. v.14 "let them pray" .. UNITED Prayer
3. v.15 "prayer of faith" .. BELIEVING Prayer
4. v.16 "one another" .. INTERCESSORY Prayer
5. v.17 "might not rain:" .. DEFINITE Prayer

Vs. 13-14 There is another ABA pattern in these verses (cf. note on 3:1–4:12). James begins with those **suffering** (A), then addresses the **cheerful** (B), and concludes with those who are **sick** (A). He alludes back to 1:2, where the one under trial was to "count it all joy." Though "sick" (Gk. *astheneo*) can also mean "to be weak" (even spiritually weak, as in Romans 14:1), when used (as it is here) without any qualifiers, it usually refers to physical sickness. - ESVSB

Is any among you afflicted? .. Let him not swear, or engage in any improper use of the tongue, but **let him pray**. God is the Helper in such an hour. PNT

suffering .. The antidote to the suffering caused by evil treatment or persecution is seeking God's comfort through prayer (cf. Psalms 27:13; Psalms 27:14; Psalms 55:22; Jonah 2:7; Philippians 4:6; 1 Peter 5:7). - MSB

Is any merry? .. Let his joy be shown, not in wanton speech, but in singing praises. Prayer and thanksgiving are the appropriate expressions for each condition. - PNT

Let him sing psalms .. The natural response of a joyful heart is to sing praise to God. - MSB

sing praises .. These verbs are a present middle imperative and a present active imperative. We get the English word "psalm" from "praises" (cf. Romans 15:9; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). James 5:13 may be saying that prayer and praise are always appropriate to God (cf. Romans 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17) in all of our circumstances (suffering or joy). - Utley

:Jas_5:14
James 5:14

James 5:14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

Sick .. the weak spiritually? Or the physically sick?

88-Ho Let Us Pray
1. For the Suffering v.13
2. For the Sick v. 14
3. For the Sinful v. 16

4. For the Statesmen - v.17-18 (1 Kings 17:1 - 18.)
5. For the Straying - v.19-20

sick .. This is literally "without strength." The term *astheneia* was used of both lack of physical strength (i.e., 2 Corinthians 11:30; 2 Corinthians 12:5; 1 Timothy 5:23) and lack of spiritual strength (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:9; 2 Corinthians 11:29) or purity (cf. Romans 6:19; Hebrews 4:15). This ambiguity may have been purposeful - Utley

Is any sick among you .. In the early church, when miraculous gifts were imparted by the laying on of apostolic hands "as a sign to unbelievers," one of these was the gift of healing. In most early churches founded by the apostles some one of the elders would have this gift.

There is no more reason for the descent of this gift to our times than of any other miraculous power. This passage, then, describes what was peculiar to the early church. The sick were anointed by the elders with oil, a symbol of the Spirit, which effected the healing, hands were laid, and prayer offered. See Mark 6:13; also Isaiah 1:6, and Luke 10:34. - PNT

call for the elders .. This is an aorist middle (deponent) imperative. Notice that it is the responsibility of the sick one to request a visit from the "elders." These procedures were to be done at the home of the weak one, not necessarily the gathered church, especially if the "anointing" was a medical massage or rubdown. - Utley

Elders .. were pastors and overseers (cf. Acts 20:17, Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 5:1-2), known for wisdom and maturity, who functioned as leaders in the churches. This provides evidence for a plurality of elders in all the churches to which James was writing, for he simply assumes a sick person could call for "the elders of the church." - ESVSB

Some think that **anointing … with oil** was medicinal or sacramental (as in Roman Catholic extreme unction at death), but it is best seen as a symbol representing the healing power of the Holy Spirit to come upon the sick person (cf. the use of "anointing" for symbolic consecration to God's use and service, both in the OT [Exodus 28:41] and in the NT [Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27; Acts 10:38; 2 Corinthians 1:21; Hebrews 1:9]) - ESVSB

elders .. Notice that the term "***elders***" is plural, as it is so often in the NT. The context of James is a believing Jewish fellowship; therefore, "elders" is probably not used in the NT sense of "pastors," "bishops" (cf. Acts 20:17; Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5; Titus 1:7), but in the OT sense of "elders" of the synagogue. The rabbis and designated leaders of the synagogues regularly visited and anointed the sick. - Utley

elders of the church .. The spiritual leaders of the Christian community (Acts 11:30; Acts 14:23; Acts 15:2; Acts 20:17; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:5). - NIVZSB

of the church .. This is the Greek term *ekklesia,* which literally meant "called out ones." It was used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew term *qahal* or "assembly" of Israel. In secular Greek it originally meant a local town assembly (cf. Acts 19:32; Acts 19:39; Acts 19:41).

It is interesting theologically that the emphasis here is on local leaders, not itinerant faith healers. Healing is a spiritual gift which is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:9; 1 Corinthians 12:28 and was widely practiced in the NT and the early church.

Notice that the elders were to go to the sick when requested, not the sick to the gathered church meeting. This was to be a private spiritual procedure. - Utley

anointing .. This is an aorist active participle. The word *aleiphô* is not the common word for ceremonial, religious anointing (*chriô* or *chrisma*), but it is the common term for rubbing on medicine. Physical touching is always emotionally significant to the sick. This may have been a culturally expected act like Mark 6:13; Mark 7:33; Mark 8:23; John 9:6; John 9:11. - Utley

[See Utley at James 5.14 for a study of the Greek terms used of anointing.]

with oil" Oil had many uses in the Jewish first century. 1. as medicine (cf. Isaiah 1:6; Luke 10:34); 2. as a

symbol of God's giftedness and empowerment of OT prophets, priests, and kings; 3. as a ceremonial symbol of God's presence; 4. as preparation for daily public activities or special times of joyful events (putting it on one's face). - Utley

anoint them with oil .. Oil was thought to have medicinal value in the ancient world (Luke 10:34), so James might be encouraging the elders to combine prayer with appropriate medical procedures.

But anointing with oil more often symbolized setting apart someone for the Lord's special attention (Exodus 28:41; Exodus 40:15); kings and priests were appointed by being anointed (e.g., 2 Kings 9:12; Psalms 45:7)—hence the association of "the Anointed One" (Messiah) with kingship. Probably, then, the anointing is a way of assuring the sick person that they are being brought before the Lord for his merciful consideration (cf. Mark 6:13).

The Roman Catholic Church has found the sacrament of extreme unction promulgated in this text. But the anointing in this passage is intended not to bring spiritual comfort to those who are dying (the focus of the Roman Catholic sacrament) or who are severely ill, but to set apart the sick person with a view to their being physically healed. - NIVZSB

In the name of the Lord .. means it is God, not the oil, that heals. - ESVSB

Wounds were **anointed with oil** to cleanse them (cf. Luke 10:34), and those with headaches and those wishing to avoid some diseases were anointed with olive oil for "medicinal" purposes (from the ancient perspective). Oil was also used to anoint priests or rulers, pouring oil over the head as a consecration to God. Christians may have combined a symbolic medicinal use with a symbol of handing one over to the power of God's Spirit (**Mark 6:13**).

A general **prayer** for healing was one of the blessings regularly recited in synagogues; ... Visiting the sick was an act of piety in early Judaism that Christians probably continued (cf. Matthew 25:36, Matthew 25:43, for ailing missionaries). - IVPBBCNT

in the name of the Lord This phrase indicates that the elders were acting as representatives of God and calling on His power (compare Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 1:15; 1 Corinthians 5:4; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; James 2:7). It serves as a powerful corporate confession of Christ as the one who is sovereign over disease and over the Church. - FSB

cf. Bible Knowledge Commentary, p. 834 xxx - Prayer and anointing the sick.

2. Supplication For Needs (James 5:14-18)

James asked a third question and then answered it fully. **Is any one of you sick?** A great deal of misunderstanding has resulted from these verses. Some seem to teach from this passage that full physical health is always just a prayer away. Others have found in this passage justification for "extreme unction" (a practice begun in the eighth century). Still others have tried to relate the process outlined by James to the modern practice of invoking God ("pray over him") and using medicine ("anoint him with oil") — prayer plus a physician.

The heart of the problem lies in just what James meant when he referred to the "sick." Actually there is no reason to consider "sick" as referring exclusively to physical illness. The word *asthenei* literally means "to be weak." Though it is used in the Gospels for physical maladies, it is generally used in Acts and the Epistles to refer to a weak faith or a weak conscience (cf. Acts 20:35; Romans 6:19; Romans 14:1; 1 Corinthians 8:9-12). That it should be considered "weak" in this verse is clear in that another Greek word (*kamnonta*) in James 5:15, translated **sick person,** literally means "to be weary." The only other use in the New Testament (Hebrews 12:3) of that word clearly emphasizes this same meaning.

James was not referring to the bedfast, the diseased, or the ill. Instead he wrote to those who had grown weary, who had become weak both morally and spiritually in the midst of suffering. These are the ones who **should call** for the help of **the elders of the church.** The early church leaders were instructed (1 Thessalonians 5:14) to "encourage the timid" and "help the weak" (*asthenōn*).

James said that the elders should **pray over him and anoint him with oil.** It is significant that the word "anoint" is *aleipsantes* ("rub with oil") not *chriō* ("ceremonially anoint"). The former is the

"mundane" word and the latter is "the sacred and religious word" (Richard Chenevix Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, ninth ed. Reprint. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950, pp. 136-7). "Therefore James is not suggesting a ceremonial or ritual anointing as a means of divine healing; instead, he is referring to the common practice of using oil as a means of bestowing honor, refreshment, and grooming" (Daniel R. Hayden, "Calling the Elders to Pray," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 138. July-September 1981:264). The woman "poured" (*aleiphō*) perfume on Jesus' feet (Luke 7:38). A host "put oil" (*aleiphō*) on the head of his guest (Luke 7:46). A person who is fasting should not be sad and ungroomed, but should "put oil" (*aleiphō*) on his head, and wash his face (Matthew 6:17). Thus James' point is that the "weak" (*asthenei*) and "weary" (*kamnonta*) would be refreshed, encouraged, and uplifted by the elders who rubbed oil on the despondents' heads and prayed for them.

For the fallen, discouraged, distressed weary believer, restoration is assured and the elders' **prayer offered in faith will make the sick person** (lit., "weary one") **well** (i.e., will restore him from discouragement and spiritual defeat), and **the Lord will raise him up.**

That the restoration is spiritual, not physical, is further clarified by the assurance, **if he has sinned, he will be forgiven.** Many physically ill Christians have called on elders to pray for them and to anoint them with oil, but a sizable percentage of them have remained sick. This fact suggests that the passage may have been mistakenly understood as physical restoration rather than spiritual restoration. - Bible Knowledge Commentary, p. 834

Jas_5:15
James 5:15

James 5:15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

prayer .. This term for prayer (*euchç*) can mean "oath" (cf. Acts 18:18; Acts 21:23) and may involve a public pledge of faith on behalf of the ill person; it may also imply a pledge of availability for God's service. - Utley

prayer offered in faith .. This relates to the prayer of the "elders," not the sick believer. Healing is not always linked to the faith of the one being healed (cf. Mark 2:5; Mark 5:35-43; John 5:5-9). - Utley

prayer of faith .. The prayer offered on their behalf by the elders. - MSB

a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick .. This proverb is a generally true statement, subject to the will of God. Only prayers that embody true faith will be answered affirmatively by the Lord, and faith for a particular healing is a gift that comes from God. See also Mark 9:23; John 14:13-14; John 15:7; John 15:16; John 16:23-27; 1 John 3:22; 1 John 5:14-15. - NLTSB

the prayer of faith .. Not the faith of the sick person but the faith of those praying. In this instance, James mentions no requirement for the sick person to exercise faith, only that he call for the elders. Christians who are ill often find personal prayer difficult. - ESVSB

sick person .. Since this Greek word could also be translated "one who is weary" (as in Hebrews 12:3), some think vv. 14–16 refer to a person who is spiritually depressed rather than one who is physically ill. But many of the words James uses in these verses occur in the stories of Jesus' healings in the Gospels. - NIVZSB

save the sick .. Deliver them from their suffering because they have been weakened by their infirmity, not from their sin, which was confessed. - MSB

If .. in the phrase "if he has committed sins," implies that not all sickness is connected to specific sins, though James seems to expect that some sickness is (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:30). - ESVSB

if he has committed sins" The "if" ... does not assume that sin is the cause of illness. However, in first

century Judaism, sin and sickness had a theological connection (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:30; Mark 2:5-11; John 5:14). However, Jesus' statements in John 9:3 show that this is not always the case. - Utley

if you have committed any sins .. James suggests that some illnesses might be caused by sin, and it is important that the sin also be confessed and forgiven (James 5:16; see Mark 2:3-12; John 5:14). - NLTSB

committed sins … be forgiven .. Not by the elders, since God alone can forgive sins (Isaiah 43:25; Daniel 9:9; Mark 2:7). That those who are suffering called for the elders implies they had a contrite, repentant heart, and that part of their time with the overseers would involve confessing their sins to God. - MSB

sins … forgiven .. As seen throughout the Gospels, Jesus healed both physically and spiritually, and the same double connotation may be present here as well.

James is not teaching that all illnesses will be healed if people would simply call on the elders, or try to make themselves have enough faith, or pray with enough conviction. Healing, when it does come, is always a gift from God, who is sovereign over all circumstances, including sickness and health. It does not follow, therefore, that lack of faith on the part of the sick person is the reason that the sick person may not be healed. (On the gifts of faith and of healing, see note on 1 Corinthians 12:9.)

Some interpreters suggest that James is referring to the promise of the resurrection rather than physical healing. - ESVSB

Will save .. perhaps carries a double meaning here: (1) the sick person will be physically healed (one meaning of Gk. *sozo*), and/or (2) the sick person may also experience spiritual salvation (another meaning of Gk. *sozo*), or growth in the blessings of salvation - ESVSB

the Lord will raise him .. It is unclear whether James asserts that the Lord will raise the sick person to health during his earthy life, or raise the person to life in the age to come. Ultimately, he asserts that the petitions of the elders and ailing person bring about some level of healing (both individually and corporately). - FSB

he will be forgiven .. James acknowledges that there are occasions when illness is tied to sin. He informs the congregation that the sick will experience spiritual restoration because of the plea, if sin is involved in the sickness.

While people suffer as a result of Adam's sin (Romans 5:19), the Bible sometimes directly correlates a person's suffering with sin. Texts such as John 5:14 and 1 Corinthians 11:29-30 reflect this idea. - FSB

:Jas_5:16

James 5:16

James 5:16 Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Confess your trespasses .. . Mutual honesty, openness, and sharing of needs will enable believers to uphold each other in the spiritual struggle. - MSB

confess your sins to one another .. . James probably is referring to the act of confessing to the offended party, which would fit with the letter's emphasis on fellowship in the congregation (see Matthew 5:23-24). Confessions could also include public acknowledgment of sin in cases where the whole church has been violated. - FSB

to one another .. . Notice that it was not specifically stated to the "elders," which one would have expected from this context, but the generalized "one another." Possibly confession is to be made to those wronged. Often the early church dealt with sin corporately and publicly (cf. 1 Timothy 5:19-20). - Utley

Pray for one another .. is directed to all the readers of James's letter and indicates that he did not expect prayer for healing to be limited to the elders (James 5:14). - ESVSB

so that you may be healed .. This could refer to physical healing or the restoration of the congregation's spiritual health. - FSB

so that you may be healed .. This is an aorist passive subjunctive which adds an element of contingency. God is the one who heals. As there was ambiguity in the Greek term "sick" in James 5:14, the same wide semantic field is found in the term "healed." It can refer to physical or spiritual healing (cf. Matthew 13:15, quoting Isaiah 6:10; Hebrews 12:11-13; 1 Peter 2:24, quoting Isaiah 53:5). - Utley

The effective … avails much .. The energetic, passionate prayers of godly men have the power to accomplish much. Cf. Numbers 11:2. - MSB

a righteous person .. Refers to a person who is committed to doing the will of God and to cultivating right relationship with Him. - FSB

effective, fervent prayer .. This seems to denote two conditions: (1) uprightness; and (2) persistence (cf. James 5:17 and Matthew 7:7-8). The effectiveness of intercessory prayer is related to the spiritual life of the intercessor (cf. Proverbs 15:29) and primarily to the will and power of God. - Utley

÷Jas_5:17
James 5:17

James 5:17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.

Elijah .. James cites Elijah not in his role as a prophet, specially chosen by God, but as a ***"human being, even as we are.***" He was a righteous person (v. 16) whom God heard (1 Kings 17:1; 1 Kings 18:41-46). - NIVZSB

Elijah .. illustrates how **a man with a nature like ours** could have the powerful prayer life of "a righteous person." The drought recorded in 1 Kings 17:1-18 was punishment on King Ahab and Israel for idolatry, and the three years and six months is probably derived from "in the third year" (1 Kings 18:1) as symbolic of judgment (half of seven; see Daniel 7:25; Daniel 12:7; Revelation 11:2; Revelation 12:6, Revelation 12:14; Revelation 13:5). - ESVSB

Elijah … prayed .. See 1 Kings 17:1; 1 Kings 18:41-46. - NLTSB

three and a half years .. (see 1 Kings 18:1; Luke 4:25) is a round figure, half of seven, which symbolizes a period of judgment (cp. Daniel 12:7; Revelation 11:2). - NLTSB

Elijah … prayed … he prayed again .. . Elijah provides one of the most notable illustrations of the power of prayer in the OT. His prayers (not mentioned in the OT account) both initiated and ended a 3 year, 6 month drought (cf. Luke 4:25). - MSB

÷Jas_5:18
James 5:18

James 5:18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

Elijah … prayed … he prayed again .. . Elijah provides one of the most notable illustrations of the power of prayer in the OT. His prayers (not mentioned in the OT account) both initiated and ended a 3 year, 6 month drought (cf. Luke 4:25). - MSB

÷Jas_5:19
James 5:19

James 5:19 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back,

5:19–20 These verses end the letter as a bookend (*inclusio*) counterbalancing the exhortation to endurance in James 1:2-4. - NLTSB

If .. contingent on two actions: (1) one believer strays and (2) another believer is willing to help. - Utley

if anyone among you .. . This introduces a third category of people in the church (cf. James 5:13-14)—those professing believers who have strayed from the truth. - MSB

wanders from the truth .. . Apostatizes from the faith they once professed (cf. Hebrews 5:12–6:9; Hebrews 10:29; 1 John 2:19). Such people are in grave danger (v. 20), and the church must call them back to the true faith. - MSB

Wanders .. The righteous saints must be vigilant in spotting anyone who **wanders from the truth**, namely, by not living in accord with the word of truth (James 1:18) as enunciated in this letter. Right belief is exhibited in right living (James 1:19-27). - ESVSB

strays from the truth .. The straying has both doctrinal and moral aspects (cf. Hebrews 5:2; 2 Peter 2:2). The term "***strays***" comes from a Greek word from which we get the English "planet." As the ancients watched and mapped the night sky, they saw that certain "stars" did not follow a regular orbit. We know these today as our solar system's planets. They called them "*the wanderers.*" - Utley

Note on: APOSTASY

A child of God can "Die"- Romans 8:12-13, Revelation 3:1-5,
Also can be "Disinherited" Numbers 14:11-12.
See also James 5:19-20,
1 Timothy 4:1-3,
Galatians 5:4,
1 Corinthians 10:12 & 1 Corinthians 9:27,
2 Timothy 2:17-18,
Hebrews 3:12,
1 John 1:7-10,
2 Peter 3:17,
Revelation 2:4-5,
2 Peter 2:20-21,
Hebrews 10:26-30,
Matthew 13:40-42,
Galatians 6:7-8,
Ezekiel 18:24,

;Jas_5:20
James 5:20

James 5:20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

5:19–20 These verses end the letter as a bookend (*inclusio*) counterbalancing the exhortation to endurance in James 1:2-4. - NLTSB

5:19–20 *Concluding Admonition.* The style of James is abrupt, and there is no concluding greeting as in most NT letters. Instead, James calls the community to action in helping those who have fallen into the ethical sins dealt with in the book. Therefore, this closing section acts as a summary of various sins and their solutions. -

ESVSB

turns .. It is significant that the Greek word *epistrephô* is used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew term for "repentance" (*shuv*). Since Israel was considered the people of God, this "turning" was viewed as "turning back" to God or the renewing of a previous relationship. That same sense is reflected in this text in James. - Utley

To **save a sinner from death** refers not merely to physical death but to eternal death, the punishment of departing from the truth of the Good News of Jesus Christ (see James 1:12; James 1:15; cp. Hebrews 6:4-8). If the sinful person listens and repents, eternal punishment will be averted (see also Galatians 6:1; Jude 1:22-24). - NLTSB

sinner .. Cf. James 4:8. A word used to describe the unregenerate (cf. Proverbs 11:31; Proverbs 13:6, Proverbs 13:22; Matthew 9:13; Luke 7:37, Luke 7:39; Luke 15:7, Luke 15:10; Luke 18:13; Romans 5:8; 1 Timothy 1:9, 1 Timothy 1:15; 1 Peter 4:18). James has in mind here those with dead faith (cf. James 2:14-26), not sinning, true believers. - The MacArthur Study Bible

the error of his way .. Those who go astray doctrinally (v. 19) will also manifest an errant lifestyle, one not lived according to biblical principles. - MSB

save his soul from death .. Not physical death (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:30) but spiritual death (cf. 1 John 5:16-17). Timely intervention (see Galatians 6:1; Hebrews 3:13) will "save his soul" and bring forgiveness from God. The person who saves the sinner in this case is the person who restores the one who has fallen.

Ultimately, of course, only the Lord saves a person. The one who restores the person will cover the many sins of the one who had strayed, for the one who returns from the way of error receives forgiveness. Again, only God can cover sin, but Christians can be agents of God's forgiveness. - ESVSB

save a soul from death .. A person who wanders from the truth puts his soul in jeopardy. The "***death***" in view is not physical death, but eternal death—eternal separation from God and eternal punishment in hell (cf. Isaiah 66:24; Daniel 12:2; Matthew 13:40, Matthew 13:42, Matthew 13:50; Matthew 25:41, Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:43-49; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Romans 6:23; Revelation 20:11-15; Revelation 21:8). Knowing how high the stakes are should motivate Christians to aggressively pursue such people. - MSB

cover a multitude of sins . .. See Psalms 5:10. Since even one sin is enough to condemn a person to hell, James' use of the word "***multitude***" emphasizes the hopeless condition of lost, unregenerate sinners. The good news of the gospel is that God's forgiving grace (which is greater than any sin; Romans 5:20) is available to those who turn from their sins and exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9). - MSB

cover over a multitude of sins .. . The sins that are "***covered***" could also be the sins of the person who has wandered (v. 19), but it might be instead (or also) the sins of the person who has intervened on their behalf (Proverbs 10:12). NIVZSB

Notes

on

JAMES

Windell Gann's e-Sword Bible Notes

The "note" file and "commentary" can be downloaded at the e-Sword module page found at http://home.hiwaay.net.net/~wgann

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