

The General Epistle of James Outline

Bible Study

4/1/26

I. Introduction (1:1)

- A. Author: James, half-brother of Jesus Christ
- B. Audience: The twelve tribes scattered abroad (the Diaspora/Jewish Christians)

II. Trials and True Faith (1:2-18)

- A. The Purpose of Trials (1:2-4): To develop perseverance and maturity
- B. Wisdom for Trials (1:5-8): Asking God for wisdom in faith without doubting.
- C. Perspective on the temporary riches which fade away (1:9-11): The lowliness of the rich and the exaltation of the poor.
- D. Temptation (1:12-16): The cost of temptation and yielding to lust (from inner desires) leads to sin and eventually death.
- E. God's Character (1:17-18): God is the giver of good gifts, not the source of temptation.

III. Doing the Word of God (1:19-27)

- A. Listening and Acting (1:19-25): Being quick to hear, slow to speak, and acting on the Word rather than just hearing it.
- B. True Religion (1:26-27): Bridling the tongue, visiting orphans/widows, and keeping oneself unstained by the world.

IV. Testing of True Faith (2:1-26)

- A. The Sin of Partiality (2:1-13): Warning against favoritism for the rich and neglecting the poor; keeping the "royal law" of love.
- B. Faith without Works is Dead (2:14-26): Faith demonstrated by action; examples of Abraham and Rahab.

V. The Test of the Tongue and Wisdom (3:1-18)

- A. Taming the Tongue (3:1-12): The power of words; teachers held to higher standards.
- B. Two Types of Wisdom (3:13-18): Earthly wisdom (jealousy, selfish ambition) vs Heavenly wisdom (pure, peaceable, gentle).

VI. The Test of Submission (4:1-17)

- A. Worldliness and Strife (4:1-10); Submitting to God and resisting the devil.
- B. Judging a Brother (4:11-12): Not speaking evil of one another.
- C. Boasting in the Future (4:13-17): Trusting in God's will rather than human planning.

VII. Patience and Prayer (5:1-18)

- A. Warning to the Rich (5:1-6): Condemnation of the selfish, oppressive rich.
- B. Patience in Suffering (5:7-11): Encouragement to be patient, looking to the coming of the Lord, as farmers wait for crops.
- C. Truthfulness and Prayer (5:12-18): Letting "yes" mean yes: the power of prayer in sickness and Elijah's example.

VIII. Conclusion (5:19-20)

- A Restoring a Sinner: Encouragement to bring back those who wander from the truth.

Key Themes:

- Living Faith vs. Idle Faith: Faith must be accompanied by deeds
- Wisdom from God: Practical godly wisdom in relationships and trials
- Perseverance: Endurance through persecution and temptation
- Control of speech
- Humility and dependence on God
- Social Justice and care for others
- Practical, everyday Christian living