

# Pure Doctrine for Holy Living

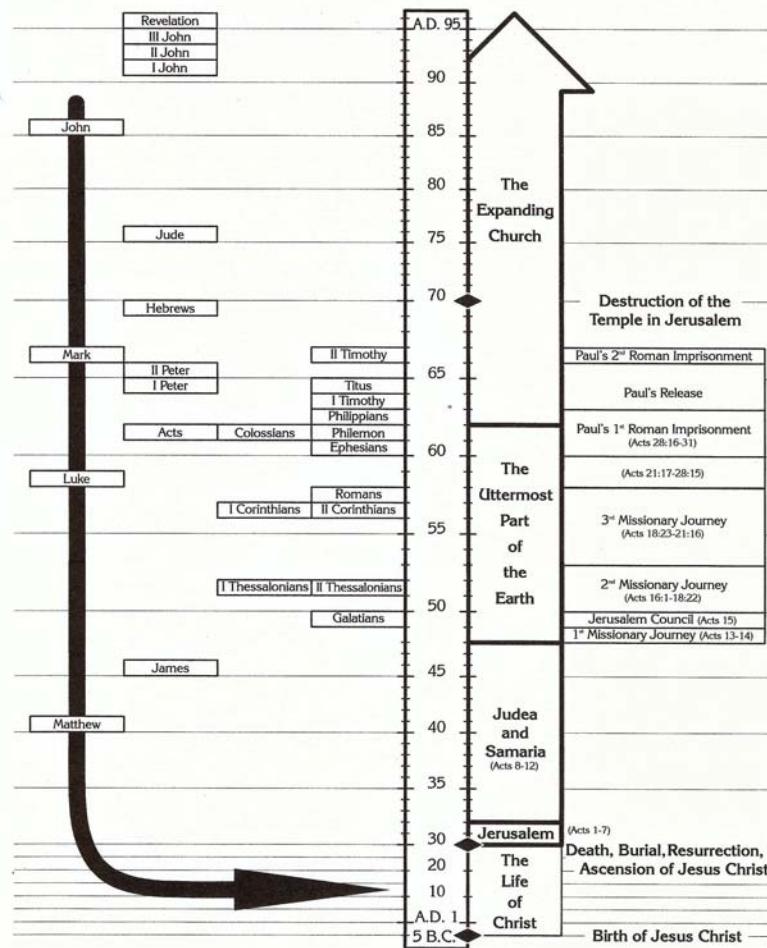
## *A Study of the Epistle of James*

Enduring Trials  
Lesson 1  
James 1:1-18

*Trinity Bible Church Sunday School  
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# The Development of the New Testament

Key Verse: Acts 1:8



# The Epistle of James to the 12 Tribes

- ▶ “You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.” (2:14-24)
- ▶ James “mangles the Scriptures and thereby opposes Paul and all Scripture.”  
– Martin Luther
- ▶ “I cannot include him among the chief books, though I would not prevent anyone from including or extolling him as he pleases, for there are otherwise many good sayings in him.” – Martin Luther
- ▶ Theme: “pure and undefiled religion” – “be perfect and complete” (1:4, 27)
- ▶ Two kinds of faith: saving faith v. non-saving faith

# **Outline of James**

1. Greetings (1:1)
2. Be Happy . . . in trials (1:2-18)
3. Be Holy (1:19-3:12)
4. Be Humble (3:13-5:6)
5. Be Hopeful (5:7-20)

# **Lesson 1: Enduring Trials (1:1-18)**

1. Greeting (1:1)
2. The blessing of trials (1:1-4)
3. The need for wisdom (1:5-8)
4. The danger of materialism (1:9-11)
5. The pathway to blessing (1:12)
6. God's goodness and our trials (1:13-18)

# Greeting (1:1)

- ▶ A bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ
  - OT and NT title for the saints
  - OT and NT title for the Messiah (Isa 49:5; Phil 2:7)
  - Pattern for the life of a true believer
- ▶ To the 12 tribes that are dispersed
  - The nation under wrath since 586 BC
  - The “mystery” phase of the plan of God (Isa 32:15; Jer 31:31)

# The Blessing of Trials (1:2-4)

- ▶ “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials.”
  - Circumstances in life that threaten our faith in Christ
  - Same Greek word translated as “trials” or “temptations”
- ▶ James’ definition of a trial: a test of our faith
  - “Test” is a process which produces something pure
  - “Test” demonstrates that faith is “genuine” in 1 Peter 1:6-7
- ▶ Genuine faith is essential for the Christian life: The just shall live by faith!
  - True faith produces perseverance in trials
  - Faith produced perseverance make “perfect and complete, lacking nothing”
- ▶ Joy comes through faith in seeing the goodness of God in the trial.

# The Need for Wisdom (1:5-8)

- ▶ Lacking in something!
- ▶ The wisdom of God is “unsearchable” and “unfathomable” (Rom 11:33)
- ▶ The wisdom of God brings blessing, happiness and peace (Prov 3:5, 13-18)
- ▶ The proper response to trials is to ask God for wisdom – before relief
- ▶ God gives wisdom “generously and without reproach”
- ▶ “Generously” (only found here in the Bible) – “simply” or “single-heartedly”
- ▶ “His single, undivided intent *is* to give us those gifts we need to please Him” (Moo)
- ▶ Doubt is the absence of faith (Heb 11:6) – compare Peter and Job
- ▶ Double-minded is to see human and divine wisdom equally.

# The Danger of Materialism (1:9-11)

- ▶ An example of wisdom from above to face trials
- ▶ The brother of humble circumstances v. the rich man
  - Poor brother – “glory in his high position” (2:5)
  - Rich man – “glory in his low position” (Matt 6:24)
- ▶ Boasting/trusting in things that matter (Jer 9:23-24; Gal 6:14)

# The Pathway to Blessing (1:12)

- ▶ Christians must evaluate life by spiritual and not material standards
- ▶ The objective is blessing.
  - Approved by God through faith (Heb 11:39)
  - The crown of life (Psalm 133:3)
- ▶ True faith perseveres as Christ persevered (Heb 12:1-2)

# **God's Goodness and Our Trials (1:13-18)**

- ▶ An important clarification: God does not tempt to sin
- ▶ Trials sometimes lead to sin
- ▶ The cause of sin in trials is our natural desires
- ▶ “Whatever is not of faith is sin” (Rom 14:23)
- ▶ God sends trials to make us “perfect and complete” and not to sin
- ▶ God is the source of good and perfect gifts – and he never changes
- ▶ He caused us to be born again to be “a kind of first fruits” among His creatures
- ▶ He acts through “the word of truth”

# **Enduring Trials to be Complete**

- ▶ Christian life is a pathway to perfection
- ▶ Trials are a means for that process
- ▶ The word of truth is the instrument we have been given to use
- ▶ We are the “first fruits from among His creatures”