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
January 6, 2019
The Development of the New Testament
Key Verse: Acts 1:8

The Life of Christ
Death, Burial, Resurrection, & Ascension of Jesus Christ

Birth of Jesus Christ

Jerusalem
The First Missionary Journey (Acts 13:1-52)
Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)

The Oldest Part of the Earth

Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:11)

The Life of the Church
Destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem
Paul's 1st Roman Imprisonment (Acts 22:6-30)
(Pet. 21:17-28:15)

The Expanding Church

The Temples

Acts
Romans
1 Thessalonians/1 Thessalonians
1 Corinthians/2 Corinthians
Galatians
Philippians
Ephesians
1 Peter
2 Peter
1 John
2 John
3 John
Revelation

A.D. 1
5 B.C.
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)
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”