

## Core Class: James

Week 29

### James: A Maturing Faith Works, But God Gives More Grace

✚ **READ JAMES:** Please take the time to read the entire letter in one sitting and then dedicate the next week or two to reread it slowly and consider how can grow as a doer of the Word.

#### ✚ **JAMES OR JACOB: THE AUTHOR?**

- Who is the author of this letter? In the first verse he introduces himself as James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - The Greek and Hebrew translation of his name:
    - Greek - Iakōbos – Jacob
    - Jewish - Ya'akov – Jacob
    - Latin – *Iacomus* -- *James*
  - Why the change and emphasis?
    - There are many theories, but we can see a shift in the 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> translations of the Bible by John Wycliffe. He stuck with James and then after 1611, King James authorized his version of the Bible. I'm sure he liked the name.
  - Most scholars believe that James (Jacob) is the half Brother of Jesus and he was named after his Grandfather (Matt. 1:16) and Patriarch.

#### ✚ **JAMES: THE LETTER**

- James is considered to be the most distinctly Jewish letter in the New Testament.
- James was the leader of the Church in Jerusalem and he wrote this letter to Jewish Christians (12 Tribes) in the Dispersion.
  - Diaspora: scattered throughout the world ... Like seed sown in a field.

- Double Diaspora: As Jews in Roman Empire and Christians who placed their faith in the Messiah.
- James was definitely influenced by Jesus' teaching as he echoes many themes from the Sermon on the Mount and the Proverbs with short pithy and observational wisdom.
- Of the 108 verses, 59 are imperatives.
  - Clear James wants Christians to grow in maturity and faith and to practice wise commands and live perfect lives.

#### ✚ **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JAMES – THEME & PURPOSE**

- 1:26-27. If you think you are Religious...
  - Bridle your tongue
  - Visit and care for orphans and widows in their affliction
  - Keep yourself unstained from the world
    - If you can, then your Religion (faith) is pure
    - If you can't, then your religion is worthless.
- James goes on from there to expose just how worthless our faith is in our own strength and merit.
- 4:6-8. "BUT He (God) gives more GRACE."
  - God Opposes the Proud ... so
    - Submit to God's Authority
    - Resist the Devil (sin, evil & self)
    - Draw near to God → He will draw near to you
    - Cleanse your Hands
    - Purify your Heart and Mind
    - Humble Yourself before the Lord → He will exalt you
    - Speak no evil against one another

## 🌈 LESSONS FROM JAMES

- CHAPTER 1 (1:19-25)
    - Be Doers of the Word. Not just hears of the Word.
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- CHAPTER 2 (2:1-13)
    - Favoritism & Partiality is a denial of our Oneness in Christ and a reflection of our arrogant selfish depravity.
    - In light of our world today, what is the Holy Spirit teaching you?
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(2:14-26)

- Faith that produces nothing is like a body without breath. Faith without works is Dead.
    - Your Faith leads to salvation
    - While your Works reveal the genuineness of your faith and salvation
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- CHAPTER 3 (3:1-12)
  - The Tongue is a small and uncontrollable force for good and evil.

- Bridle & Bit
  - Rudder of a ship
  - Fire
  - Cursing & Blessing
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- CHAPTER 4 (4:1-12)
    - Our fondness of and with the world reveals our rebellious, offensive and adulterous heart towards God.
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- But God gives more Grace. Amazing!
    - Spend some time in reflection God's Grace given to you.
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- CHAPTER 5 (5:1-20)
    - (11) In every life circumstance (wealth, health, trials, suffering, etc.), remain steadfast for the Lord is compassionate and merciful.
    - (16) Confess your sin. Pray with great power.
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