**The General Epistle of James**

**James Chapter 1**

1James,[[1]](#footnote-22276) a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,[[2]](#footnote-12349) to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.

2My brothers and sisters, count it all joy when you encounter trials of various kinds, 3knowing that the testing of your trust produces endurance. 4Now let endurance have *its* full effect,[[3]](#footnote-23450) so that you become *fully* mature and whole, lacking in nothing. 5But if any of you lacks wisdom, ask God *for it*, who gives to everyone generously and without finding fault, and it will be given to him. 6But he must ask in trust, without doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea blown and tossed around by the wind. 7Indeed, that person must not expect that he will receive anything from the Lord. 8A double-minded person is unstable in all his ways.

9Now the brother[[4]](#footnote-25216) in lowly circumstances should boast in his high position, 10and the rich *brother* in that he is brought low, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. 11For the sun rises with a burning heat and withers the grass, and its flower falls off, and the beauty of its appearance perishes. So also the rich person will fade away in *the midst of* his pursuits.

12Blessed is the person who endures *through* trials, for when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that *God* promised to those who love him. 13No one should say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself does not tempt anyone. 14But each person is tempted by his own desire, being dragged away and enticed *by it*. 15Then the desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin, and the sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death.

16Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers and sisters: 17all giving *that is* good and every gift *that is* perfect is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. 18By his own will he gave birth to us by the message of truth, so that we would be a kind of firstfruits of what he has created.

19Know *this*, my beloved brothers and sisters: every person is to be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger, 20for human anger does not produce the righteousness of God. 21Therefore, putting away all moral filth and wickedness (which is so prevalent), receive with meekness the word *that has been* planted in *you*[[5]](#footnote-22826) that is able to save your souls. 22But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a person who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror, 24for he looks intently at himself and goes away, and immediately forgets what he *looked* like. 25But the one who looks carefully into the perfect law—the *law* of freedom—and continues *in it*, not being a hearer *who* forgets but a doer *who* acts, this person will be blessed in what he does.

26If anyone thinks he is religious and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, his religion is worthless. 27Religion *that is* pure and undefiled before *our* God and Father is this: to care for the orphans and widows in their hardship, *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world.

**James Chapter 2**

1My brothers and sisters, have *your* trust in our Lord Jesus Christ,[[6]](#footnote-19909) *the Lord* of glory, without showing favoritism. 2For if there comes into your synagogue a man with a gold ring *and dressed* in fine clothing, and there also comes in a poor man *dressed* in filthy clothing, 3and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothing, and say, “Sit here in a good place,” but you say to the poor man, “Stand *over* there,” or “Sit by my feet,” 4have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

5My beloved brothers and sisters, listen! Didn’t God choose the poor of the world to be rich in trust and heirs of the kingdom that he promised to those who love him? 6But you have treated the poor man shamefully. Is it not the rich who oppress you and drag you into the courts? 7Do they not blaspheme the good name by which you were called? 8However, if you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, Love your neighbor as yourself,[[7]](#footnote-20643) you are doing well! 9But if you show favoritism, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10For whoever keeps the whole law but stumbles in one *point*, he has become guilty of all *of it*. 11For he who said, Do not commit adultery,[[8]](#footnote-13758) also said, Do not murder.[[9]](#footnote-21887) Now if you do not commit adultery, but commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12So speak and so act as those who are going to be judged by the law of freedom. 13For judgment *is* without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

14My brothers and sisters, what does it profit if someone says he has trust but does not have works? Can that trust save him? 15If a brother or sister is without clothing and lacks daily food, 16and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, keep warm and eat well,” but you do not give them what is necessary for the body, what does it profit? 17So also trust by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18But someone will say, “You have trust, and I have works.” Show me your trust without *your* works, and I will show you *my* trust by my works. 19You believe that there is one God. You do well! Even the demons believe *this*—and tremble *in fear*. 20But are you willing to recognize, O empty-*headed* person, that trust without works is useless? 21Was not Abraham our father declared righteous by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? 22You see that his trust was working together with his works, and his trust was made complete by his works, 23and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, And Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,[[10]](#footnote-11828) and he was called the friend of God.[[11]](#footnote-28244) 24You see that a person is declared righteous by works, and not by trust alone. 25And in the same way, was not also Rahab the prostitute declared righteous by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by a different route? 26For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also trust without works is dead.

**James Chapter 3**

1Not many *of you* should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, knowing that we will receive a stricter judgment. 2For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, that person is *fully* mature, being able to bridle his whole body as well. 3Now if we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole body as well. 4Look! The ships also, though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot wants *to go*.

5So also the tongue is a small part, and *yet* it boasts great things. Look how small a fire sets ablaze such a large forest! 6And the tongue is a fire! The tongue—a world of unrighteousness—appoints itself among the parts of our *body*, staining the whole body and setting on fire the course of life, and is being set on fire by Gehenna. 7For every species of beast and bird, reptile and sea creature, is subdued and has been subdued by the human species. 8But no one is able to subdue the human tongue. *It is* a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse people, who have been made according to the likeness of God. 10Out of the same mouth comes blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, these things should not be this way. 11Does a spring pour forth from the same opening *both* sweet and bitter *water*? 12My brothers and sisters, is a fig tree able to produce olives, or can a grapevine *produce* figs? Neither can a saltwater spring produce sweet *water*.

13Who is wise and has understanding among you? By his good way of life let him show his works with meekness that comes from wisdom. 14But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not boast *about your wisdom* and lie against the truth. 15This wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, worldly-minded,[[12]](#footnote-22342) demonic. 16For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every kind of evil practice. 17But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, reasonable, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruit, without prejudice, without hypocrisy. 18And the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who cultivate peace.

**James Chapter 4**

1Where does the fighting and where does the quarreling among you come from? Is it not from this: from your *desires for* pleasure that are at war in the parts of your *body*? 2You desire, and *yet* do not have. You murder and are envious, and *yet* are not able to obtain. You quarrel and you fight. You do not have because you do not ask. 3You ask and *yet* do not receive because you ask with wrong motives, so that you can spend *it* on your pleasures.

4Adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever chooses to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, the spirit that he caused to live in us yearns enviously? 6But he gives a greater grace. This is why it says, God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.[[13]](#footnote-13456) 7Therefore submit yourselves to God. Resist the Devil,[[14]](#footnote-28927) and he will flee from you. 8Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded! 9Grieve, and mourn, and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to gloominess. 10Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and he will lift you up.

11Do not speak evil against one another, brothers and sisters. Whoever speaks evil against a brother or sister, or judges his brother or sister, speaks evil against the law, and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge. 12There is *only* one Lawgiver and Judge: the One who is able to save and to destroy. So who are you to judge your neighbor?

13Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a city and spend a year there and do business and make a profit.” 14You do not know what tomorrow *will bring*. What is your life? For you are a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes. 15Instead, you should say, “If the Lord wants, we will live and do this or that.” 16But as it is, you boast in your arrogant *plans*. All such boasting is evil. 17Therefore, whoever knows to do good but does not do it, it is sin.[[15]](#footnote-26009)

**James Chapter 5**

1Come now, you rich, weep and wail for your miseries that are coming upon *you*. 2Your riches have rotted and your clothes have become moth-eaten. 3Your gold and your silver have rusted, and their rust will be a witness against you, and will eat your flesh like fire. You have stored up treasure in the last days. 4Look! The wages that you withheld by fraud from the laborers who mowed your fields cries out, and the cries of those who reaped *the harvest* have reached the ears of the Lord of Armies. 5You have led a life of self-indulgence on the earth and lived for pleasure. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. 6You have condemned—you have murdered—the righteous person, who does not oppose you.

7Therefore brothers and sisters, be patient until the coming of the Lord. Look! The farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and latter rain. 8You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord has drawn near. 9Brothers and sisters, do not complain about one another so that you will not be judged. Look! The Judge is standing at the gates. 10Brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord as an example of suffering and of patience. 11Look! We consider those who have endured to be blessed. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome from the Lord, that the Lord is full of compassion and *is* merciful.

12But above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear, not by heaven, nor by earth, nor by any other oath, but let your “Yes” mean “yes,” and *your* “No” mean “no,” so that you do not fall under judgment.

13Is anyone among you suffering hardship? He should continue to pray! Is any cheerful? He should continue to sing praise! 14Is 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. 15And the prayer of trust will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

16Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray one for another so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect.[[16]](#footnote-16944) 17Elijah was a human being with a nature like ours, and he prayed a *fervent* prayer that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. 18And he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain and the earth brought forth its fruit.

19My brothers and sisters, if any among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20know that the one who turns back a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

1. Lit. “Jacob” [↑](#footnote-ref-22276)
2. Lit. “the Anointed One” [↑](#footnote-ref-12349)
3. Lit. “complete work” [↑](#footnote-ref-23450)
4. A generic term for a Christian believer. [↑](#footnote-ref-25216)
5. Lit. “the implanted word” [↑](#footnote-ref-22826)
6. Lit. “the Anointed One” [↑](#footnote-ref-19909)
7. From Lev. 19:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-20643)
8. From Exod. 20:14; Deut. 5:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-13758)
9. From Exod. 20:13; Deut. 5:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-21887)
10. From Gen. 15:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-11828)
11. From Isa. 41:8; 2 Chron. 20:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-28244)
12. Lit. “of soul.” We have no good English equivalent. [↑](#footnote-ref-22342)
13. From Prov. 3:34 [↑](#footnote-ref-13456)
14. “Devil” is from the Greek word diabolos, which literally means “Slanderer.” [↑](#footnote-ref-28927)
15. Lit. “for him it is sin” [↑](#footnote-ref-26009)
16. Or “when it is energized” [↑](#footnote-ref-16944)