

A CHAIN OF JEWELS  
FROM  
JAMES AND JUDE



BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK

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*A CHAIN OF JEWELS  
FROM  
JAMES AND JUDE*

Donald Fream

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College Press, Joplin, Missouri

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College Press Publishing Company

Second Printing, 1977  
Third Printing, 1981  
Fourth Printing, 1987

Printed and Bound in the  
United States of America

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 1965: 71-1073  
International Standard Book Number: 0-89900-045-2

# CONTENTS

## —JAMES—

	Preface .....	5
Chapter I	Salutation 1:1.....	11
Chapter II	Trials Produce Steadfastness 1:2-4.....	16
	True Wisdom is God-Given 1:5-8.....	19
	The Anticipation of the Rich and Lowly 1:9-11..	25
	The Way of Temptation and the Results of Endurance 1:12-15.....	29
	Sermon Outlines and Sermon Three-Point Outlines 1:2-15.....	35
Chapter III	Introduction .....	41
	The Source of All Good Things 1:16-18.....	42
	To Listen Is Better Than to Speak 1:19-21.....	48
	Listening is Pointless Without Doing 1:22-25....	51
	Vain and Pure Religion Contrasted 1:26-27.....	54
	Sermon Outlines 1:16-27.....	58
Chapter IV	Special Studies: Alive and Free in Christ.....	62
	Introduction: Over-Rated Riches 2:1-13.....	68
	Temptation in the Church 2:1-4.....	69
	Why Over-Rating Riches is Sin 2:5-9.....	74
	General Principles 2:10-13.....	79
	Sermon Titles with Three-Point Outlines 2:1-13..	83
Chapter V	Introduction: The Devil's Faith 2:14-26.....	85
	Can Faith-Only Save? 2:14.....	87
	Faith-Only is Dead, Being Alone 2:15-17.....	90
	Godly Faith vs. the Devil's Faith 2:18-20.....	93
	Faith-Only Does Not Justify 2:21-24.....	99
	Faith Must Have Works 2:25-26.....	105
	Three-Point Sermon Starters 2:14-26.....	109
	Special Study—"Works".....	110
Chapter VI	Introduction: The Foolish Teacher 3:1-12.....	113
	Temptation in Teaching 3:1-2.....	114
	A Big Thing in a Little Package 3:3-5a.....	117
	Wild and Uncontrolled 3:5b-8.....	120
	Mr. Two-Faced 3:9-12.....	125
	Three-Point Sermon Starters 3:1-12.....	129

Chapter VII	Introduction: The Truly Wise Teacher 3:13-18...	133
	Wisdom Demonstrated 3:13.....	134
	The Source of Faction 3:14-16.....	137
	Wisdom from Above 3:17-18.....	142
	Three-Point Sermon Starters 3:13-18.....	149
Chapter VIII	Introduction: Cause and Remedy of Strife 4:1...	152
	Selfish Pleasure a Source of Trouble 4:1-3.....	154
	Dedication to God Alone is the Only Answer 4:4-8a .....	161
	From Where We Are to Where We Should Be 4:8b-10 .....	171
	Judging Our Brethren 4:11-12.....	175
	Three-Point Sermon Starters 4:1-12.....	179
Chapter IX	Introduction: Pretended Debate with a Rich Un- believer 4:13-5:6.....	182
	The Presumption of Planning Without God 4:13-17 .....	183
	The End of the Ungodly Rich 5:1-6.....	188
	Three-Point Sermon Starters 4:13-5:5.....	194
Chapter X	Introduction: Resist Fiercely, Brethren 5:7-12....	197
	Hold Yourself in Check 5:7-9.....	198
	Victory Will Come, for God is Real 5:10-12....	202
	Three-Point Sermon Starters 5:7-12.....	206
Chapter XI	Introduction: Five Remedies for the Christian 5:13-20 .....	207
	When the Saint Suffers 5:13a.....	208
	When the Saint is Happy 5:13b.....	210
	When the Saint is Ill 5:14-15.....	212
	When the Saints Sin Against One Another 5:16-18 .....	217
	When the Saint Errs from the Truth 5:19-20....	224
	Three-Point Sermon Starters 5:13-20.....	227
	Special Study—The Doctrine of Justification by Faith .....	229

—JUDE—

1a.	Introduction and Salutation: A Believer Kept Securely in the State of His Choice V.1,2.....	250
2a.	A Believer Who Keeps Himself by Contending For a Growing Faith V.3.....	254

3a.	A Written Warning of Apostasy V.4.....	257
4a.	Teaching on Apostasy From Old Testament History V.5.....	261
5a.	A Metaphore From the Spiritual World That Illustrates Apostasy V.9,10.....	268
	A Trilogy of Woe V.11.....	272
5b.	Metaphores From Nature That Illustrate Apostasy V.12,13.....	274
4b.	Teaching on Apostasy From Old Testament Prophecy V.14-16.....	278
3b.	A Spoken Warning of Apostasy V.17-19.....	282
2b.	A Believer Who Guards Himself By Building Up a Growing Faith V.20-30....	285
1b.	Conclusion: A Believer Guarded Securely In the State of His Choice V.24,25...	289
	Special Study—The Holy Spirit .....	291





## PREFACE

Although the book of James has had as few commentaries as perhaps any book within the New Testament, the writer freely admits the factual information contained in this volume has been gleaned from numerous other writings and commentaries on the book (See Bibliography). The purpose of this book, however, is not to simply add to the list of commentaries already written on James, though they be relatively few. This work is not, and was not intended to be, a highly critical, technical and linguistical contribution. Rather, this book (it is hoped), in following the original format of the *Bible Study Series*, will form a useful contribution to the fresh approach of these Bible studies.

The author has endeavored to be fair in presenting various views of controversial interpretations. He requests the reader, however, to expect that the author's preferences will be made clear. In the various paraphrases used, more than one view is sometimes expressed. That view preferred by the author will always be listed first. In the *Comment* sections, the author attempts to clearly set forth his reasons for his preferred views.

It is expected that this volume will serve as a study text to enable Bible students, whether teacher, preacher, or pupil, to better make his own study of the book of James. The format is in keeping with this intended purpose. Questions regarding the text are offered in each section *before* the comments, and the paraphrases. The purpose in this is that the reader will attempt to answer the questions regarding the text from the text itself, using no commentary other than the Bible. The author admits his conviction that the Bible is its own best commentary; the questions are given with this thought in mind. It is often suggested other scripture texts that may be used in conjunction with the question at hand.

Since the epistle has within the text its own introduction, introductory material concerning the writer, date, etc. will be included at the appropriate point in the text. Every effort has been made to keep this work a Bible study, rather than a study about the Bible.

## MEMORY

The writer would like to encourage the serious student to make an honest effort to memorize the entire text of the book of James.

At first suggestion, this might seem like a task of such a proportion as to be entirely impossible. The average reader, however, will be able to memorize the text with ease if he will follow the suggestions made.

It is not suggested that the reader be able to memorize the entire epistle at one effort. Although some who have developed a keen memory will find this the easiest way, the majority will find this mass approach discouraging and all but impossible. The study is divided into sections of the text; and most of these sections are short in length, being between one and four verses each in most cases. If the reader will be steadfast in memorizing each section before going on to the next section, there will be no formidable memory task. As he memorizes each section, he should *be sure* to repeat by memory the former sections already learned. This review is fully as important as the original memorizing if the student wishes to retain what he has learned. Do not be content to repeat the memorized material only once. Repeat it often, *especially after first committing to memory*. It is not difficult to repeat that which is already committed to memory, but it is easily forgotten if it is not repeated.

One housewife in Arkansas clipped the first verse of the epistle to the window of her kitchen sink. She determined to learn that verse in one day. To her amazement she found that by the time she had finished the breakfast dishes, she knew the first verse perfectly. As she went about her household affairs that morning, she repeated the verse every time the thought came to her mind. At noon, she decided to put the second verse of the epistle over the kitchen sink under the first. It came as easily as the first: while she was doing the dishes. On that first day, she memorized the first three verses. At this rate, she committed the entire epistle to memory in *five weeks*. So thrilled was she with this accomplishment she told her friends at Bible School. They, too, at first thought it was an impossible task. Those who tried, however, memorized the book as well. *You can too. Will you try? Make an honest effort.*

## FORMAT

*Text:* The American Standard Version is used throughout. Since this text is admitted by most scholars to be the best translation available, we make no apology for its use here. However, we do

think the student would profit by having other translations available for his study. It is suggested that the student choose a translation he prefers for his memory work, and use that one translation in his memorizing of the text. Comparing all available versions will often clarify the meaning, so several should be used.

*Queries:* These questions immediately follow the text, and are designed to excite the interest and understanding of the student. This interest and comprehension will give the student initial motivation, and there is no real learning without both this comprehension and motivation. It is expected that the student will endeavor to answer the queries *before* reading the paraphrases and the comments to follow. He may wish to adjust some of his thinking after reading further, but first he has done some *original thinking* on the text.

*Paraphrases:* This is an endeavor to render the sense of the text in the framework of the author's intended meaning. Even though many may disagree as to the original author's intended concepts, we insist that this intended meaning is the only way to correctly read the text. At least two paraphrases are given for each text. The first being that of the author; and the last, marked with an \*, being from the "*Living Letters. . . The Paraphrased Epistles*," edited by Ken Taylor and used by permission of the Tyndale House Publishers. Often there will be another paraphrase given between the first and the last. This middle paraphrase will indicate a second possible concept intended by James. The first paraphrase given will be that preferred by the author of this book.

*Summary:* The heart of the text is here intended. This is the main thought in summary form, minus the descriptions, adjectives and illustrations. Thus several verses will be reduced to one or two sentences.

*Comment:* This is intended to help in understanding the text. Problems in comparing the correct meanings of the original text to the commonly accepted meaning of words used in the translation will be discussed. It is intended that these comments will more than clarify the text. We should like to apply the text and motivate the pupil to make personal adjustment to his own thinking and

living when necessary. We hope these comments will be stimulating, applicable, and even personal at times.

*Additional Features:* Several "special studies" are offered, where it is thought that additional material is especially useful or applicable at that point. In addition, sermons in outline form are given throughout the book at the end of each chapter. This is hoped to be an asset to teachers and preachers who intend to teach and preach from the book of James.

*Acknowledgments and Gratitude:* To my mother-in-law, Pansy Reed Click, who spent many hours correcting the rough draft, the author wishes to express sincere appreciation. Appreciation is also extended to the copyrighters of the *Living Letters, the Paraphrased Epistles* by Kenneth N. Taylor, who permitted the portion of that text used in this book.

It is with sober understanding of the responsibility assumed by anyone who teaches from the Word of God that this work is offered. With prayer and humility the author reads again James 3:1 ff. He is further humbled by a consideration of the dozen commentaries consulted in compiling this work. This is submitted with a prayerful hope that some will be stimulated to a more accurate study of God's Word.

Donald Fream  
April, 1965

A CHAIN OF JEWELS  
FROM  
JAMES AND JUDE



## CHAPTER I

James 1:1

### SALUTATION

*Text 1:1*

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, greeting.

### *Queries*

1. Is there more than one "James" in the New Testament? (Identify them, if possible.)
2. Is the position of servant generally considered to be a position of honor among men, or dishonor? Is it a position that calls for pride, or humiliation? Is "servant" the correct connotation for every Christian?
3. Could the Lord Jesus ever be referred to as "God", or must the term God always refer to the Father? (Remember John 1:1)
4. How many of the original twelve tribes were in existence at the time of Christ's incarnation? What happened to the tribes that no longer existed?
5. To what could the term "twelve tribes" refer? (Try to think of more than one possibility.)
6. Why do you think the translators of the American Standard Version capitalized the word "Dispersion"? Do you think it should be capitalized?

### *Paraphrases*

- A. James, a bondservant of the God and Lord, Jesus Christ; writing to the true Israel - the church that is scattered far and near - sends you joy.
- B. James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, writing to the Jewish Christians of the Dispersion, sends you greetings.
- C.\*From: James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.  
To: Jewish Christians scattered everywhere. Greetings!

*Summary*

James, the author, expresses his humble relationship with God. He then addresses his letter to the twelve tribes (evidently figurative, for the twelve tribes did not then exist), and expresses joy in writing to them.

*Comment*

The Greek word "servant" is here *doulos*. Its root meaning is bond-servant (A.S.V., margin), or slave. It is thus not a means of elevating the author above other men because of his relationship with God. Although the word may indicate subjection without the idea of bondage, it always connotes the idea of subjection, never elevation. There are nine different nouns translated "servant", but this particular one can only mean humble submission—whether submission of bondage or voluntary submission.

Bondslaves in the Roman empire were sometimes bound by an iron neckband. The iron collar was welded around the neck. Only a blacksmith could remove it - and no blacksmith dared remove it for it was the mark of a slave!

Wonderful Jesus: I am His bondslave, with the band of His love about my heart. Only I have the key. No one, other than myself, can remove it. "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39). Although no creature can steal me from my Lord, yet, I may, if I so desire, unlock the band and slip away to the pigpens of this world. Of my own free will, I am His bondslave. He made me, and He purchased me. This is fact. I choose to recognize His ownership. This is my will.

At least three persons in the New Testament are referred to as "James:" the son of Zebedee, the son of Alphaeus, and the brother of Jesus. All known facts point to James, the brother of Jesus, as the author of this epistle. It is agreed by all from antiquity that the James of Gal. 1:19 is the author. The author could not have been the son of Zebedee, who was an apostle and also the brother of John, for he was killed by Herod in 44 A.D. (Acts 12:2). There are some, however, that argue that there are only two James' in the New



Testament; that the James of Gal. 1:19 was not in reality a brother of the Lord, but a cousin, and the same as "James the less" (i.e. the son of Alphaeus.) Thus (they argue) Jesus had no real brothers, and Mary (Jesus' mother) had no sons and daughters, other than Jesus. The obvious refutation of the ingenious argument is in the parenthesis in the chart that follows.

The date of the epistle cannot be exactly established. James, the author, died in 63 or 68 A.D. It was written from Jerusalem, probably during the final ten years of his life. Some, however, hold that it was written previously to the Jerusalem council in the year 50.

Some may wonder that the Lord's brother, James, was called an apostle in Galatians 1:19. James is here distinguished from the twelve apostles by positive identification: The Phrase, "The Lord's brother," prevents any possibility of confusing him with one of the twelve. The word "apostle" also describes Barnabas (Acts 14:4,14), Andronicus and Junias (Romans 16:7), Silas and Timothy (I Thess. 2:6), Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25, R. V. margin), and two unnamed brethren (2 Cor. 8:23, R.V. margin). These were not of the apostolic office, and were not members of the "twelve", although all were obviously "sent forth" with the Word. In each of these uses, along with James in Gal 1:19, the word, "apostle", is used in a sense beyond the twelve chosen to the apostolic office.

"Of God" and "of the Lord Jesus Christ" could refer to two different personalities (i.e., the Father and the Son, Jesus), or the two phrases could be two different designations for the same one, Jesus, who is both God and Messiah (Christ). This latter is not only a possibility, but a probability that is in perfect harmony with other Scriptures. 2 Peter 1:1 and Titus 2:13 leave no doubt that God is a term that is properly applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. (Also compare Gen 1:1 with John 1:1; 1 Cor 8:6; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; and Heb. 1:1-2.) In this light Jesus' true nature is more clearly revealed. Jesus is not only the man who suffered temptation, humiliation, and death; but He is the God who broke the bonds of death in His resurrection. He reigns in heaven over His kingdom not as man, but as God. He was not created as were men but came from, and returned to, eternity—co-existent with the Father. He not only is my "elder brother," but He is my Savior and God, and truly worthy of my adoration and worship.

The "twelve tribes of the Dispersion" likewise has two applications. The Jewish heart held dear the concept of the twelve tribes

1. JAMES, THE  
BROTHER OF  
JOHN

SON OF ZEBEDEE  
AN APOSTLE

KILLED BY HEROD  
44 A.D.  
(Acts 12:2)

3. JAMES THE LESS (Mk. 14:40)  
AN APOSTLE, THE SON OF ALPHEUS.

Question: Was the son of Alphaeus the same as the brother of Jesus?  
(The seven point argument that he was the same is followed by the refutation in parenthesis.)

- (1) Mary always remained a virgin, so Jesus could not have brothers through Mary. His cousins were called brothers and sisters.

(A complete assumption about the status of Mary. The New Testament nowhere indicates she remained a virgin, but rather the contrary.)

- (2) Brother is equal to the term "cousin."  
(Nowhere in the New Testament Scripture is it so used.)
- (3) Mary, the wife of Clopas (John 19:25) was a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus.  
(Is it likely that there would be *two sisters* in one family with the *same* name?)

- (4) Alphaeus and Clopas are different forms of the same name.
- (5) "James, Joseph, Simon, Judas" were all cousins of Jesus—and James and Judas were his cousin Apostles.  
(They were never so called. When they became Christians, they were distinguished from the twelve in Acts 1:14.)

- (6) Since Jesus on the cross commits the care of His mother to John, this proves she had no sons except Jesus.

(Jesus' brothers were not his followers at this time; so Jesus gave his mother to the care of John.)

- (7) Gal. 1:19 calls Jesus the brother (i.e., cousin) of Jesus an "apostle."

(The term is also used of eight others who were not of the apostolic office . . . see comment on next page. "Apostle" is here used in a general sense of one being sent, and not one of the "twelve" of the apostolic office.)

4. JAMES, THE  
BROTHER OF  
JESUS

A SON OF MARY,  
THE MOTHER OF  
JESUS

THE AGREED  
AUTHOR OF THE  
BOOK OF JAMES.

This James was a permanent resident of Jerusalem.

He was preeminent in the church (Acts 12:7; 15:9; 2:21). He was a chief figure of the council of Jerusalem and a pillar of the church. (Acts 15, Gal. 2:9).

He was killed by stoning before the Sanhedrim (A.D. 63.?) \*

(Josephus, Antiq. 20:9:1)

\* (Hegesippus says about 68 A.D.)

2. JAMES, THE  
FATHER (OR  
BROTHER) OF  
JUDAS

ONLY MENTIONED  
ONCE IN THE  
NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 6:16

even though they were no longer in existence. (The northern tribes were completely obliterated after their captivity in 722 B.C.) Yet those who remained still preferred to maintain their tribal identity (see Luke 2:36). "Dispersion" was a term often applied to the Jews who were scattered.

However, the word, which means scattering, could be properly applied to any people who were scattered. There are two possibilities here: (1) The Jewish Christians who were scattered abroad, or (2) All Christians who were scattered abroad. Although there were three or four million Jews in the Dispersion at this time, the church of Jesus Christ was also scattered abroad. The expression here most probably refers to the scattered church, for the church of Christ is the true successor to the twelve tribes, and all Christians are the adopted sons of Abraham. (See Gal. 3:23-29.)

Also, note the epistle is addressed to the twelve tribes of the Dispersion. Dispersion need not be capitalized here if the term refers to the church rather than being limited to the Jewish Christians. The contents of the entire epistle bear out the argument it was addressed to all Christians who were dispersed, and not just to the Jewish saints.

Thus, we may properly conclude the epistle was not addressed and intended for a particular people and circumstance that has no bearing, or only indirect bearing and application for us, and no general instruction for the church. Rather, this is God's instruction to us; and by our personal study and application of this epistle, we can live lives more pleasing to Him and be more adequate witnesses for Him in this world. This epistle is medicine for many sick souls, and contains the answers to many church problems.

## CHAPTER II

### THE WAGES OF THE WISE

James 1:2-15

#### TRIALS PRODUCE STEADFASTNESS

*Text 1:2-4*

2. Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations:
3. Knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience.
4. And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing.

#### *Queries*

7. Is it really fun to be tempted? Should it be? In what sense would it be wrong to have pleasure in temptation?
8. To the sincere Christian who hates both the thought and practice of sin, wherein is the joy?
9. What is the real meaning of "patience?" Use a good Bible dictionary or commentary. . . . look it up!
10. There is a progression of four qualities in these verses. The first of the four leads to the second, etc. What are the four, and the relationship between them?
11. In what sense could a work be called a "perfect" work? (you might profit by looking up the word "perfect" in a Bible dictionary. Also look it up in an English dictionary and note how the word often has a different meaning today.)
12. In the light of the possible good results of temptation herein described, why did Jesus, in describing the manner of our prayer, say: "Lead us not into temptation?"
13. What ordinary part of an epistle is here omitted? (i.e., why do we classify this as a "general epistle?")

#### *Paraphrases*

- A. 2. When you are subjected to the many kinds of temptations, my

fellow Christians, look on it from the bright side, as if it were joy;

3. for the result of the temptation that is resisted is that you have passed the test and are approved. This victorious testing results in in a bulldog tenacity.
  4. And, in order that you may become completed and accomplished, having everything worthwhile, continue to hang on like a bulldog and you will finish the course.
- B. 2. Dear brothers, is your life full of difficulties and temptations? They be happy,
3. For when the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow.
  4. So let it grow, and don't try to squirm out of your problems. For when your patience is finally in full bloom, then you will be ready for anything, strong in character, full and complete.

### *Comment*

Often the right use of affliction is of more value than the removal of that affliction. If God sees fit not to remove the affliction, then we can only count that the right use of the affliction *must* be of value. Thus, if out of some affliction we have only grief and sorrow, an occasion of sinning, a stumbling and faltering; but see no profit and no blessing, then, we must have been missing some opportunity. The opportunity may have been growth through resistance of sin; or it may yet be, as with Christ, preparation to have sympathy and compassion on others who have like sufferings; or it may be, as with Paul, the apostle, that we learn all the more to depend upon God's grace. To really know that God's grace is sufficient, might give us such an understanding of the grace of God as to make us far more effective teachers and workers for the Lord.

Intense pressure on common carbon makes diamonds. Likewise, the trial of one grace may produce another grace of even more value. While producing patience in you, God may be producing a diamond for this darkened world; and through the trial of your faith, He thus forms one of the most valuable jewels in His kingdom! God's ability to do the impossible, through the most unlikely subjects, is a continual and amazing demonstration of His grace in molding and

making us. No wonder I am asked to look upon affliction as if it were nothing but joy!

God allows our faith to be tested with the expectation that we shall be approved when the test is completed. "Proving" here has that meaning. It is this successful trial of our faith that results in a bulldog tenacity to hang on. "Patience" is the concept of hanging on with a grip that will not let go. It is much more than long-suffering, and has no connection with a humble submission to any circumstance. Rather, it is the *I-shall-not-be-moved* attitude.

If we continue to hold out under all circumstances (literally, the word patience means to "hold out under"), without wavering, but hanging on unto the end, then, patience will have its complete (perfect) work. This will result in our gaining approval and being purified, as with a trial of fire. It will result in our gaining the crown of life. Its result will be that we shall gain every bit of the spiritual blessing and heavenly promise God has in store for us. Patience, then, can be said to be closely associated with our will. We *choose* to hang on. Without this continuous spirit of steadfastness, it is very unlikely that we shall finish the course, for both the temptations of the devil and the circumstances of this life are very much against the unstable man's continuing to the end without being led off course.

James is not in this section saying that temptation is good, nor that it is pleasure, but looking to the result of the successful trial, we look upon temptation as if it were joy. The temptation to sin should still be avoided and we should shun even its appearance. Satan will see to it, however, that we are not successful in our effort to shun every temptation. When it cannot be avoided, then, we should tenaciously hang on to Christ with a view to the end when He shall say to us, "Well done." There are other kinds of sufferings we face that may not, necessarily, be temptations to sin. Yet, these too are temptations, by the very fact that our suffering is involved.

God has given us the promise that we shall not be tempted beyond our ability to resist. (I Cor. 10:13) Perhaps on the judgment day, we shall realize as never before that every sin we have committed is of our doing (Jas. 1:13,14), and that we have absolutely no room for blaming God for even the circumstances that led us to sin. These very circumstances are God's efforts to make us grow and become approved, not to make us sin.

## TRUE WISDOM IS GOD-GIVEN

*Text 1:5-8*

5. But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.
6. But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting; for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed.
7. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord;
8. A doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways.

*Queries*

14. Why say "If any of you lack wisdom?" Is there an implication here that some people have sufficient wisdom, and a few may lack wisdom? Is it not true that all men need more wisdom in God's service? Why the "if?"
15. "Liberally" can have meanings other than abundantly. Use an English dictionary and find some other possibilities.
16. Without looking up any references or other Scriptures, write down your concept of the meaning of "upbraideth not." Having done this, try to determine if your present concept is correct. Use a Bible dictionary or commentary as well as other Scriptures. If you were wrong the first time, be sure to write down any correction you may wish to make. (This will fix the new meaning in your mind.)
17. Is faith a general and necessary aspect of prayer? True, it is mentioned here in connection with prayer, but is this a general teaching concerning the linkage of prayer and faith throughout the N. T. ? (see Matt. 21:21; Mark 11:23; Rom. 4:20; 14:23; James 5:15; and Heb. 11:6.)
18. In what way is a doubter like a surge of the sea (v. 6) ?
19. Are not all of us driven by circumstances of environment, even as a wave of the sea? Why should we be "blamed" for this any more than a wave could be blamed for being tossed about?
20. Why say this man who is like a wave is "double" minded? To what can this "double" mind refer?

21. Is there any similarity or contrast between the patient-minded man of verses 2-4 and the double-minded man of verse 8? How would you compare them?
22. Does verse 5 end with a promise that God will give to us that for which we ask? If this is true, would it not be dangerous to pray? How could we pray without fear and trembling if God grants us the object of our prayer? (i.e., suppose we, in innocent ignorance, should ask for many things that are harmful to us. Is not this an actual fact in your own experience?)
23. How can it be said that God will not give that man anything (v. 7), when God pours out His blessings upon all men. . . . upon the just and the unjust alike?
24. Are people who are unstable in some of their ways, necessarily unstable in *all* their ways? Is it not possible to be doubtful, or unable to make up our minds on *some* issues, and yet be very stable on other issues? How do we harmonize this with the teaching of v. 8?

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 5. But if any of you need wisdom in order to continue with this tenacious spirit of a bulldog, then ask God for this wisdom. God gives to all men with an unmixed benevolence that does not resent your asking. Ask wisdom of God, and God will give it to you.
  6. But let him ask believing that God will grant his request. He that cannot make up his mind is like a wave that is blown and tossed about and never gets anywhere.
  7. If a man is like that wave, he will not get anywhere with God, either.
  8. A man who has two conflicting purposes in life, is confused on every issue he faces, and in everything he does.
- B.\*5. If you want to know what God wants you to do, ask Him, and He will gladly tell you, for He is always ready to give a bountiful supply of wisdom to all who ask Him; He will not resent it.
6. But when you ask Him, be sure that you really expect Him to tell you, for a doubtful mind will be as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.
  - 7,8. And every decision you then make will be uncertain, as you



turn first this way, and then that. So if you don't ask in faith, don't expect the Lord to give you any solid answers.

### *Summary*

God does not leave us to flounder, for He wants us to ask him if we need more wisdom. Of course, we should ask, believing it will happen, or else we will be confused in all our planning and deeds.

### *Comment*

"If any man lack knowledge, let him go to college." But wisdom is an entirely different matter. Good teachers may impart to us facts of life, whether of this earthly life or of the spiritual life, in such a way that we can recall these facts and repeat them when necessary. Having learned these facts, we may be enabled to make good grades in school, or to carry on a fascinating conversation. We may be enabled to use the facts in such a way as to demonstrate our ability to recall them. But this is not wisdom.\* (see below) Wisdom is more than just the use of knowledge. . . . it is the *practical* use of knowledge. Thus, wisdom is the ability to use knowledge in such a way that it brings benefit to the kingdom of God, to our fellow man, and to our own way of life.

A good teacher may lead us in the way of wisdom, but a good teacher cannot impart wisdom to us. Wisdom is not contained in a list of facts to be learned, but rather in a process, a way of living. Thus, we speak of those who have "common horse-sense" (although often it is not so common!)

To continue steadfastly in the way of the Lord, hanging on in spite of all trials and temptations, will take wisdom. We need the ability to keep the end result in mind when it is momentarily lost from sight. We need the ability to keep our life focused on Jesus when the devil has us surrounded with the filth of this life. We need the ability to bear up under spiritual growing pains, to ever be able to recall the temporary nature of sensual pleasures, to see through the camouflage of things seen to the real nature of things not seen. We cannot walk in the way of Christ without motivation; and without wisdom, motivation fades.

Wisdom, although in a measure may come from experience,

\*Wisdom is the ability to *apply these facts to practical living.*

comes more as a God-given blessing. Having identical experiences, some may end up with wisdom while others have no wisdom. The difference is a blessing and a grace. The difference is God-Given. If one knows his need of wisdom (all men need some wisdom, but not all men know they need it!) then, let him ask of God. The Perfect Teacher (Christ) can do for us what the good teacher cannot do. He not only can impart to us the way of righteousness, but He can *lead* us in the paths of righteousness. To know, takes knowledge. But to know what to do, takes wisdom.

The liberality of God is evident everywhere. Witness the long-suffering of God with those who refuse to repent. God does not say, "He had his chance," but rather, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how *often* would I . . ." God is not content with giving an opportunity. He gives *opportunities*. He is not content to give a blessing, He gives *blessings*. If God pours out His blessings even upon the unjustified, how much more will He bless those who are justified in Christ. If those of this earth are granted a measure of earthly wisdom, how much more will God give to His children who ask Him for wisdom! So often we seek wisdom from an inadequate source. Some of the greatest teachers in the secular colleges of this earth still flounder without the wisdom of God. Man, with all his scientific studies, can at best only offer an inadequate description of his meager observations of God's created world. If you need wisdom, seek it from the real source: God, the giver of wisdom.

This giving God is a God of real love. He gives simply, with a single purpose: profit to the receiver of the gift! He gives without any strings attached. This is the first meaning of "liberality". Yet in Matt. 6:22 and Luke 11:34 the singleness of liberality seems to take on an aspect of opposing evil (Perhaps this is another way of saying the double-minded man is evil!) There is no hidden purposes with God's gifts. He gives because He loves us and not because of hidden benefits. He expects to receive. God is lavish in His gifts (especially of wisdom), so let us ask of the giving God who gives without any strings attached!

Since God gives without any hidden and subtle motivations of a selfish nature, then He is not thwarted in His giving. He has no reason to "rub it in" once He has given. He "upbraideth not."

Upbraiding is a selfish, human trait that is ungodly, unlovely, and unbecoming of any man. This is the practice of "throwing it up" to the man who received the gift. Upbraiding seems to say, "I

wanted something to hold over your head. . . and now I have it, and I'm not going to let you forget it!" Upbraiding seems to say, "I have a great psychological need so that I can feel superior. I am not superior until I have given to you; but now that you have received of me you owe me the privilege of gloating."

The good deed of a gift is blemished by "throwing it up" to the person who received the gift. (Eccl. 18:15-18) A constant reminder to the grateful receiver of a gift can become far more inconvenient than the lack of the gift would have been in the first place. Perhaps this "rubbing it in" is one of the reasons gifts from the greatest giving nation in the world have not always been appreciated. The wise man gives the same way as God: he upbraideth not. (Eccl. 41:22)

So often are we cautioned in the Scriptures to pray, "Thy will be done," that it certainly becomes clear our wisdom is no match for God's wisdom. What we think we desperately need is often seen by God to be the exact thing we do not need. We should seek from God that which we desire with the reservation that He grant to us that which is best for us, even if it means denying us the object of our prayer. We count it an answer to prayer when God in His wisdom says, "No, my grace is sufficient for you." Sufficiency is often better than a spoiling over-abundance. Yet there seems to be no such limitations on our request for wisdom.

We are told, "It shall be given him." To ask in faith, nothing doubting, seems to say in this place: "Ask, believing God will give you the wisdom you request; and make your plans accordingly. God *will* give it to you!" This would then be more than an affirmation that God would hear our prayer: God will grant our request! However, we must point out that the wisdom promised here is for a particular purpose. It is wisdom so that we might be able to hang on to Christ without wavering so that we can be built up in him, having no spiritual need. God is not here promising an ability to make more money than we need. Here God is not saying we shall know how to succeed in politics with this given wisdom. He is not granting us wisdom to find "loopholes in the law of grace" and so plan our lives that we (being self-deceived) think we can willfully live the life of sin and get away with it. He is not promising us wisdom to become the devil's servants. We can do all this without wisdom. We need the wisdom that we might let steadfastness have its complete work, thus fully completing us in Christ.

My brother, is this the wisdom you want? Does your soul hunger and thirst after righteousness? Do you wish to be bound to Christ with a love that will not be broken? Do you wish to know how to stick to Him and never give up? Then ask God for His wisdom. You have his promise. He will give it.

If Abraham had been like this doubter in verse 6, he would have had a very difficult time making up his mind to leave Ur. Having left Ur and buried his father in Haran, he might have then returned to Ur, being uncertain as to whether or not God really meant what He said. Also, he would be filled with turmoil not knowing whether or not God really would keep His promises. The doubt of Abraham (thank God, he didn't doubt, but was unwavering in His confidence in the promises of God) in this supposed example would have filled his mind with indecision and uncertainty and would have shown up in his very life as complete instability.

The doubter is here at variance with himself, unable to decide whether or not, or to what extent, he should put personal confidence in God. This is opposed to the faithful man here, who has confidence in God to the extent he believes God knows and God cares; and with this confidence he is ready to surrender to God's knowledge and care. The man of faith does not have to know all the answers himself, for he has confidence in God. To say, "I don't know what is best," may be an expression of faith rather than doubt. If one admits his own inability to know the answers, yet has confidence in the answers God gives him, this man has faith. He has a source of absolute truth. He can build his life on an unshakable rock. He is not to be compared with the doubting man who says: "I do not know the answers, and I'm not certain that God knows the answers . . . . In fact, I'm not sure there are answers."

Or, to say again, "I do not know the answers. God does know the answers, I am sure; and it is rather sad that man is so far removed from God that he can have no way of knowing, beyond doubt, what to do to become or to remain satisfactory in His sight," is to again express doubt. Whether this attitude should come from an intellectual skeptic or from one who is constantly at variance with himself, the result is the same: a willfully wavering man whose request for wisdom is not granted. Perhaps, it is not granted because his own willful doubt shows he does not really wish it to be granted. Such a one is warned that he has no right to think "that a doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways, shall receive any-

thing of the Lord." (Marginal reading, A.S.V.) God's promise of heaven is not given to those who show they do not want heaven. Likewise, His promise of wisdom in steadfastness is not given to those who show they do not *want* to be faithful.

## THE ANTICIPATION OF THE RICH AND LOWLY

### *Text 1:9-11*

9. But let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate:
10. and the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.
11. For the sun ariseth with the scorching wind, and withereth the grass; and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so shall the rich man fade away in his goings.

### *Queries*

25. How could a Christian be a brother of "low degree"? (To find the correct answer in this passage, search these few verses to find with what this brother of low degree is contrasted.)
26. With whom is the high estate of this brother of low degree associated? (Phil. 3:14)
27. If this brother is poverty stricken, doing menial work that pays very little; and has met other personal misfortunes in his life, how can it be said he has a "high estate"? (Give several ways in which this estate is tremendous. You might want to look up "estate" in the dictionary.)
28. If the rich man of verse 10 is a Christian Brother, then in what way is he "made low?"
29. If the rich man is not a Christian, how is he made low?
30. Which seems more likely, that this rich man is a Christian, or not? (Note what is to pass away. Will it be his riches that pass away and the man himself remain forever with Christ, or is it indicated that the man shall pass away with his riches?)
31. Do you think riches are really a danger to most Christians? (i.e., if they had riches, do you think this might endanger their souls? see James 2:1 ff, 2:6-8; 5:1-6; Luke 1:48, 1:51-53; 16:

19-31; 18:18; Matt. 6:19-21; Job 24:22-24; 27:19ff.; Psalm 49:16-20.) What of *you*?

32. Why do you think "flower of the grass" is used as an illustration, rather than the passing away of this earth? (Isn't it true that this earth shall also pass away?)
33. See if you can find another expression for the term: "Grace of the fashion of it."
34. Does the phrase "in his goings" imply anything about when the rich man is likely to "fade away?" Do you think most people finish all the "going" they would like to do, or intend to do, before they die?

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 9. But let the Christian brother who is humiliated by the circumstances of this life rejoice in what he has already received of the spirit and in what he is due to inherit from God.
10. But the rich man (if he thinks he can!), let him rejoice in the fact that he shall have no inheritance because as any green herbage will wither away when scorched by the hot sun and dehydrated by the thirsty wind, he too shall wither away. (He cannot take it with him!).
11. For when the boiling sun and the hot wind come, they wither the grass; and the flower of the grass wilts and falls, and the majestic beauty of its appearance is completely destroyed: in the same way shall the rich man with his experiences and fortunes perish while still on the move.
- B.\*9. A Christian who doesn't amount to much in this world should be glad, for he is great in the Lord's sight.
- 10,11. But a rich man should be glad that his riches mean nothing to the Lord, for he will soon be gone, like a flower that has lost its beauty and faded away, withered—killed by the scorching summer sun. So it is with rich men. They will soon die and leave behind all their busy activities.

### *Summary*

While the Christian can rejoice in heaven to come, the rich man's wealth will buy none of it. Although it may take a few years longer,

his riches shall fade just as surely as the grass fades; and then he will have nothing.

### *Comment*

Poverty is often a blessing, for the poor man in this world's goods more easily recognizes his need of spiritual help. The rich man, feeling a sufficiency in material things, will often feel that he can buy his own way in any circumstance. Therefore, he will be reluctant to seek the favor of gifts from any man, and will be unlikely to seek grace from God. He is independent and self-sufficient. He will pay his own way. What he needs, he will buy, or with clever manipulations, take it from others. He does not ask for gifts because none wish to give to the man who already has a superfluous supply of this world's goods. Although dying of spiritual starvation, he does not even know his hunger.

The brother of low degree is, no doubt, the Christian who has little of this world's goods; but such a one is fortunate indeed. Being a Christian, he is saved, redeemed, reconciled, adopted, sanctified; he is a child of God, an heir of God's heavenly fortunes, and a joint-heir with Christ. An innumerable host of heavenly creatures await him at "home": Christ has gone ahead to prepare a mansion for him; his happiness will be complete, with no tears, sorrows, heartaches nor death. The riches of this world are nothing when compared with the "chain of jewels," inherited by the Christian.

The rich man *can* go to heaven. It will not be because of his riches, but in spite of his riches. His wealth will be a constant source of temptations, for "the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil". He doesn't have to love his money, however: he can love Christ first of all. Zachaeus was rich (Luke 19:2). Many of Jesus' friends seemed to be people of material success. Joseph of Arimathaea, Barnabas, Nicodemus, Mary (sister of Lazarus), and the women of Galilee.

The general tendency, however, is that explained in Mark 10:25. It is so difficult for a rich man to overcome the temptations of his riches that he is unable to see beyond the love of his riches . . . except for the help of God. Yet with God, all things are possible. The will of man is so involved in God's using the rich man, that much of Jesus' teaching seems to be directed here. (See Matthew 6:19-34; 19:16-30; Luke 12:15-21; 16:9-31; Mark 10:24. Compare with I.

40. If God cannot be tempted with evil, then how was Jesus tempted?
41. Since God Himself tempts no man, harmonize this with the fact that Jesus was *driven of the spirit* into the wilderness to be tempted. (Mark 1:12)
42. Explain how the warning in verse 13 has a real vital purpose with most of us.
43. What does God promise the Christian regarding the extent of his temptations? (see I Cor. 10:12,13)
44. Does the source of temptation here contradict the general New Testament teaching that the devil tempts man to sin? How do you harmonize the two ideas? (Consider who we must really *blame* for our falling into sin.)
45. For harmonious relationship of this teaching with the rest of the New Testament, compare verses 13 and 14 with Roman 7:8, 10, 13, 17; Heb. 11:17, and I Cor. 10:9. Make a note of the common teachings in these passages.
46. What is the contrast between verses 13 and 15? (This has to do with *responsibility* for man's failure.)
47. When two factors are united, they often cause particular results. there are three sets of double factors, with the results of each given. In V. 14 and 15. What are these three sets and the results of each?

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 12. Happy is the man that remains faithful to God through temptations to sin, for in the end he shall receive that which the Lord has promised to such a one: the crown of life.
  13. No man should blame God when he is tempted to do wrong. God cannot be tempted to do wrong Himself, nor does He tempt any man.
  14. Rather every man should blame himself for his temptation, for such temptation is possible only through the lustful desires that are within him.
  15. When a man gives in to these desires to do wrong, sin results: and sin leads to death.
- B.\*12. Happy is the man who doesn't give in and do wrong when he



is tempted, for afterwards he will get as his reward the crown of life that God has promised those who love Him.

13. And remember, when someone wants to do wrong, it is never God who is tempting him, for God never wants to do wrong and never tempts anyone else to do it.
14. But temptation is the pull of man's own evil thoughts and wishes.
15. Then the evil thoughts lead to evil actions and afterwards to the death penalty from God.
16. So don't be misled, dear brothers.

### *Summary*

The devil, not God, tempts us to sin, and he does so only through our own desires to do evil. Thus, we should never blame God for the temptation to sin. God doesn't want us to sin, for He punishes sin with death.

### *Comment*

Two destinies of man are set forth in this section: the blessed happy state of those who love God, and the state of death which is inherited by those who bear the penalty for sin. This happy (blessed) state is evidently a result of anticipation of the crown to be received, with this crown being symbolic of the "high estate" of verse 9 (see comments on this verse). Note, however, that this crown is a gift that is *conditioned*. It has been promised to those who love God, with this love evidently being demonstrated by endurance of temptation. If one is not willing to so demonstrate his love for God, then, he should not expect God to approve his workless faith.

The King James version "when he is tried" of verse 12 is not quite the correct meaning of the original. The idea is more than a trial . . . it concerns a person who, when tried, has been proved genuine. To take the test is not enough, the course must be passed! The idea of enduring temptation is that one bears the temptation and remains faithful. This does not necessarily mean that if one is overcome while he is fighting, he is lost. The basic question is: "Whose side are you on?" The Christian who errs hates his error, for he loves God's ways. Even though he may have done wrong, he is still on God's side, and he continues to fight sin. He desires to repent and seeks help from God. If he does not feed and support these spiritual desires, then

he may be completely overcome by sin. Since errors must be overcome through repentance and a seeking of forgiveness from God, some who backslide never recover. The Christian who delays repentance and continues in sin, is walking with one foot (and possibly both) in hell, and there is no hope for him while he continues in such a state. (Heb. 6:6)

There are three or four basic reasons why the Christian must overcome his trials and temptations. (1) He loves God, and to sin violates this basic desire to please God. (2) He realizes that remaining faithful during temptation leaves one stronger than he was, and this may be a means of growing in spirituality and tenacity (patience). (3) He wants to avoid above all else the hopeless condemnation that awaits those who willfully continue in sin. (4) He looks forward with joyful anticipation to the crown of life to be received by those who do endure.

The hope for the crown of life expressed in verse 12 culminates a process described in verses 2-4. Note the progress: verses 2-4, temptation resisted leads to proving of faith; proving of faith leads to patience; and patience leads to hope for the crown of life (v. 12). Notice how this parallels the declaration of Paul.

*James has in 1:12*

*Paul has in Rom. 5:3-5*

- |                                 |                  |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Temptation                   | 1. Tribulation   |
| 2. Endurance (Proving of faith) | 2. Steadfastness |
| 3. Approved                     | 3. Approvedness  |
| 4. Hope (for a crown of life)   | 4. Hope          |

This explains one end of temptation, but in the remaining verses of this section, we see that temptation can go a second way. Thus, temptation, (1) when endured goes to approvedness and hope; and (2) when surrendered to it goes to sin and death. The difference is in the will of man. This section of Scripture is arguing the *individual responsibility* of man for sin. Man must not blame God. Nor can he lay the full blame on the tempter, for his temptation is only possible through the lust that is within him. The deadly character of sin, emphasized by both Paul and James, is all the

more reason why man must know and face his responsibility in sin. Sin is not something of such little consequence that it can be ignored. Sin not only makes all the difference in the world, but all the difference out of the world! To deliberately close our eyes to our responsibility for our guilt, is to ignore the fact that Jesus died for us. Notice how both Paul and James emphasize *this* responsibility, by comparing James 1:13-15 with Romans 7:8,10,13; Heb. 11:17; I Cor. 10:9.

Since God tried Abraham in the offering up of his son (Heb. 11:17) some might argue that this contradicts the case that God tempts no man. Also, the fact that the Israelites made trial of the Lord (I Cor. 10:9) seems to contradict the case that God cannot be tempted. These "contradictions" are not real, however. The Israelites did not tempt God to do evil, but rather to bring a just punishment upon them. Although Abraham was tried by God (i.e., his meeting the situation was a testing and proving of his faith), yet, if he had any temptation to do evil and not obey God, this did not come from God. This part, if any, came from within Abraham's own doubt. Thus, if Abraham walked in full assurance of faith, his faith was tried, but he was not tempted to sin. Any temptation to sin would spring from his own weaknesses, and not from any weaknesses in God's character. Every choice laid before us is a testing of our faith. Every temptation to take the wrong course in such a choice comes from our own desires.

Temptation (*peirasmos*) is apparently a very inclusive term in this case. Paul speaks of "that which was a temptation to you in my flesh," Gal. 4:14, with seemingly a morally neutral value, with a good significance, especially since the Galatians did not despise nor reject Paul because of feelings of natural repugnance that may have been aroused. Then again, Jesus asked us to pray not to be led into temptation; i.e., trials beyond our willful control, Matt. 6:13. Our own carelessness and disobedience can also be a source of temptation when we give in to the weakness of the flesh. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak," Matt. 26:41. This temptation covers also the definite devil-produced trials designed to lead us into sin. "But they that are rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition," I Tim. 6:9. (c.f. Luke 4:13, 8:13). The word can even be descriptive of our temptation to try or challenge God. "Harden

not your hearts, as in the provocation, like as in the day of the trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tried me by proving me, and saw my works forty years," Heb. 3:8-9.

The universality of the possibility of temptation should humble every man of us. "*Each* man is tempted when . . .", there are conditions under which any man has the possibility of temptation. This is true of a Christian, a "long-time" Christian, and a Christian who walks very close to God, even one "after God's own heart." Those who teach that a "second work of grace" so conditions us that we are beyond the possibility of temptation need to take a second look . . . a look at both the Scriptures and at their own lives! "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us," I John 1:8. Even Jesus was tempted "in all points as we are," Heb. 4:15. Paul said he had to "buffet his body" to bring it into subjection, I Cor. 9:27. Under no circumstances must we lower our guard against the possibility of temptation. With the help of God, we shall be overcomers: not because we have not sinned, but because we have no sin!

The grace of God through the blood of Christ so covers my sin that I can appear in God's presence without sin, wearing the cloak of Jesus' righteousness. That which I have overcome (sin) by Jesus' blood, the new creature that I am must not love and seek for; but rather I must flee from it, heeding the warning concerning my own lustful desires, praying for strength and God's leading, buffeting my body when necessary.

If I refuse to accept the warnings, it is not only possible, but likely, that I will be dragged off by my own lust, taken in tow by my own desires. Then, I will have no one to blame but myself. Satan, who tempts me, has no power over me that I have not given him, for I am "able to endure it" (I Cor. 10:13) if I will to so resist.

There are certain things, or certain amounts, that I should not eat. This is true, not because God has so stated, but because I know it will harm the "temple" of my body, thus hindering my useful service for God. Yet, when I have "overdone" it, or have eaten that which would hinder my service for God; whom shall I blame? I do not like to eat boiled cow's feet. Even though the cook has prepared a large pot of boiled cow's feet, cooked and flavored to perfection, I would not be tempted to eat from the dish! However, if the dish were banana cream pie, topped with a huge scoop of ice cream covered over with whipped cream, I would have a desire to eat. . . . even if the dish followed a huge meal from which I had already

overeaten! The devil has no power to tempt me, except there is the desire within me to partake. The desire to do wrong is my own. I cannot blame God for it, nor can I blame Adam for it. The natural forces about me may furnish the circumstances, the devil may cook the meal, God has created man, I received my body from my parents; but, the willful choice is of my own doing! I "know my transgression, and my sin is ever before me," Psalm 51:3. I fall and sin, not because of external conditions, but because I choose to yield to that which is within. "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom 7:24-25a)

The figure of birth in verses 14-15 is very descriptive of the processes of sin. Two factors unite and give birth to a third. This whole process, if not stopped, results in the death-child. Notice the three unions: (1) grandfather lust within and grandmother evil without give birth to enticement, (v. 14); (2) father lust within and mother enticement give birth to sin, (v. 15a); sin matures and being married to the law of God ("The wages of sin is death", Rom. 6:23) gives birth to death, v. 15b. Repentance and confession may avoid and break the process of sin (I John 1:7-9; Acts 8:22), but if this sin process is not stopped, the child will be born!

Whether or not verse 16 is to go with that which went before, or with that which follows, might evoke some discussion. There is no reason, however, why this verse cannot be a bridge connecting both sides. "Do not be deceived about the source of temptation" on the one side, and "Do not be deceived about the source of every good gift" on the other. The expression thus serves to emphasize and repeat the warning that to be blind to the source of temptation would be to carelessly cultivate the process of death within us. How very important it is to know of a certainty that I am a sinner, personally and emphatically responsible before God, and as such, I am in desperate need of the gift of salvation. Thus, my heart is prepared for the verses to follow regarding the source of all good things.

### *Sermon Outlines*

#### IS TEMPTATION A JOY?

1:2-4

Proposition: When should a Christian not have joy in temptation, and how could a Christian find joy in temptation?

## I. Temptation is no joy.

- A. The Christian hates sin, and does not want to sin.
- B. The Christian is instructed by God to flee temptation.
- C. God promises the Christian he shall not be tempted beyond that which he is able to bear.

## II. Christians are tempted.

- A. They live in the flesh, and the flesh still has appetites.
- B. The Christian still has his free will. His choice of God means there is the possibility of another choice.
- C. The devil does not give up. He is rather more zealous in his efforts to lead a Christian to sin.
- D. Most of the New Testament is written to Christians to encourage them to faithfulness, thus making it evident that a Christian *can* wander away from God.

III. We can count temptation *as if* it were joy.

- A. Not because of the desire to sin. There is no joy in even the appearance of evil.
- B. Not because of the possibility of doing sin. This horrifies us. We long for the day when we will be beyond temptation.
- C. Because of the result in us if we are faithful in the temptation:
  - 1. We grow in strength to resist.
  - 2. We grow in understanding others who are tempted.
  - 3. We prove our faith in Christ.
  - 4. Temptation resisted completes our Christ life, and the result is that we have no spiritual shortcoming.

## THE ROAD TO TRUE WISDOM 1:5-7

Proposition: What is the source of true wisdom, and how do we get it?

Introduction: True Wisdom Defined: More than knowledge . . . the ability to know what to do with knowledge.

## I. The source of True Wisdom: God.

- A. He is all-powerful; He knows everything; He is everywhere.

- B. He wants to help; He "giveth."
- C. His nature is to give liberally, abundantly.
- D. He upbraideth not when He gives.
  - 1. He does not hold it against the one who receives.
  - 2. He is not continually "rubbing it in," nor gloating over us.
  - 3. He has no subtle and hidden selfish reasons for giving.

II. The means of obtaining True Wisdom: Seeking.

- A. Seek Wisdom at its source: God.
- B. Hear God's wisdom that is given: His Word.
- C. Seek in faith, knowing God has the wisdom and His Word is true.
- D. Use the wisdom when received, else it will be useless.

III. Warning against Double-mindedness.

- A. To waver in your confidence in God's ability, is to waver between two masters.
- B. The undecided goes nowhere, like a wave of the sea.
- C. To have a double mind is to be unstable in everything else.

THE SUFFERING STATE OF THE CHRISTIAN 1:2-12

Proposition: To show how and why a Christian faces temptation.

Introduction: Troubles and affliction may be the lot of the "best" Christians. Closeness to the Lord does not immune from suffering, but rather we may expect that it may be our lot to "suffer with Him."

I. Outward afflictions and sufferings may be a temptation to the Christian.

- A. By the devil's drawing men to commit sin.
- B. By the desire to refrain from doing the duties and services to God.

II. Temptations are numerous and varied.

- A. "Divers" temptations, includes all kinds and varieties.
- B. They are hard to detect, for they come from "within."

- C. Our love for friends and relatives is a subtle and insidious source.

### III. Duties of Christians under trial:

- A. Resistance to be exercised in "joy" . . . count it as if it were all joy. (Because God allows it for our future benefit.)
- B. Faith is to be exercised.
  - v. 3 "The trial of your faith."
  - v. 6 "Let him ask in faith."
- C. There must be a steadfastness.
  - "Faith worketh patience."
  - Tribulation worketh patience," Rom. 5:3
- D. Prayer requests for needs during trial are in order.
  - 1. Especially for wisdom.
  - 2. We are encouraged to pray (v. 5)
  - 3. We have the definite promise of God concerning wisdom requests. (v. 5)

### IV. Temptations Resisted bring Rewards.

- A. Our Christian spirit is tried and made firm.
- B. Our spirit of resistance is made stronger.
- C. Our dependance upon God is strengthened.
- D. By resistance we prove our love for God, and become recipients of the promised crown.
- E. Resisting temptation serves the interest of God's kingdom and edifies His body.

## *FOURTEEN SERMON TITLES WITH THREE-POINT OUTLINES*

### THE JOY OF KNOWING v. 2,3

- A. Christians are tempted.
- B. Temptations are directed toward the Christian's faith.
- C. Patience is the intended result.

### THE PERFECT WORK OF PATIENCE v. 4

That you may be: A. Perfect, B. Entire, C. Lacking in nothing.



## SEEKING WISDOM v. 5

- A. We need it
- B. The only source is of God.
- C. We must seek it to get it.

## WISDOM IS FROM GOD v. 5

- A. He gives liberally.
- B. He does not hold it against those who receive from Him.
- C. He promises results.

## HOW TO ASK OF GOD v. 6

- A. Ask for that which we have a right to receive.
- B. Ask in faith.
- C. Waver not, neither in confidence nor in life.

## FAITHLESS FAITH v. 6-8

- A. A doubting man is like the wave of the sea. v. 6
- B. A doubting man gets nowhere and receives no results. v. 7
- C. A doubting man is also unstable in other ways. v. 8

## WAVERING WAVES v. 6

- A. They have no will of their own, and are at the mercies of others.
- B. They are driven by the pressure of winds outside themselves.
- C. They are tossed to and fro.

## WHEN YOU'RE DOWN AND OUT v. 9

- A. You will see your need of Christ and seek help of God.
- B. In Christ you have many brothers.
- C. You have great cause of rejoicing through spiritual exaltation.

## RAGS OF RICHES v. 10-11

- A. The rich can go only in one direction: down.
- B. The illusionary beauty of riches is temporary.
- C. The attainments of the rich shall pass away.

## WILTING WONDERS OF THIS WORLD v. 11

- A. Circumstances of this life scorch and burn them.

- B. Their results fail and fall.
- C. Their beauty is temporary.

**WHY ENDURE** v. 12

- A. We are blessed when we do.
- B. We have the approval of God when we do.
- C. We shall receive the crown of life if we do.

**DON'T BLAME GOD** v. 13

- A. God, who has no lust, cannot be tempted with evil.
- B. God tempts no man to do evil.
- C. To blame God is to attempt to avoid the responsibility for our temptation.

**TEMPTATION'S SOURCE** v. 14

- A. Temptation comes when we are drawn away from God.
- B. Temptation comes from the lust within man himself.
- C. Temptation is an enticement that snares and entraps.

**THREE GENERATIONS** v. 14,15

- A. Lust plus enticement begets temptation.
- B. Temptation plus "giving in" begets sin.
- C. Sin plus its continuance begets death.

## CHAPTER III

### RECEIVING FROM GOD

James 1:16-27

#### *Introduction*

After fourteen verses of showing the "Way of the Wise", James has concluded that our trials are good for us, producing steadfastness—that true wisdom is not produced of man, but comes from God. Since this wisdom comes from God, we should listen to God's warnings about the end of the rich man and the results of both temptation and endurance.

With this true wisdom coming from God we must know how to receive it from God. To hear what God has to say seems to be an art in itself. It is an artful expression of complete submission to His will. Receiving from God is the natural result of faith, the natural culmination of hope, and the producing of God's kind of love in us. Whether or not we are willing to receive knowledge, instruction, and wisdom from God will make the difference in vain religion and pure religion.

All too common among people who claim Christ is the practice of examining God and telling God what to do. Men often act as if they were the judges of God, and far from receiving wisdom from God, they seem better satisfied to give of their wisdom to God. How often we have heard the expression: "God could not be logical and reasonable in His action if He required man to do anything for the receiving of His grace." (Who are we to tell God what is logical and reasonable?) Or again, "A loving God could not permit anyone to go to hell!" (Telling God what He can or cannot do!) Or, "I'm as good as those old hypocrites in the church. If they are allowed into heaven, God will allow me in also!" (As if we were the one who worked out the scheme of redemption from before the foundation of the world! As if we were the one who went up into heaven and brought Jesus down to be born of a woman! As if we were the one who went beyond death and brought Jesus back from the grave! Oh, how far from God man can get with his own vain philosophical reasoning. How futile are the best answers man can devise. Truly, the wis-

dom of man is foolishness with God; and the really wise man will receive his wisdom from God.

### *Outline*

God the Great Giver, gives many things, and they are all good. Therefore we should listen and heed. This will result in both active service and pure religion on our part.

THE SOURCE OF ALL GOOD THINGS 1:16-18

TO LISTEN IS BETTER THAN TO SPEAK 1:19-21

LISTENING IS POINTLESS WITHOUT DOING 1:22-25

VAIN AND PURE RELIGION CONTRASTED 1:26-27

### THE SOURCE OF ALL GOOD THINGS

#### *Text 1:16-18*

16. Be not deceived, my beloved brethren.
17. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.
18. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

#### *Queries*

48. How can verse 16 refer to verse 17? (It is easy to see how we could be deceived by sin, but how could we be deceived about the Father?)
49. Could it be possible that there are good gifts that do not come from the Father? (Be careful . . . think this one through!)
50. What word in v. 17 seems to be parallel to "perfect"?
51. "Perfect" usually means complete, or finished, in the New Testament. Here it may have an additional connotation. What is it?
52. In what ways can it be said that God is the "Father of lights?"
53. The "no variation" of the Father may be contrasted highly with another figure in the earlier part of the chapter. Who or what is it?

54. How can something cast a shadow by turning?
55. How does this lack of a "shadow by turning" illustrate God?
56. Why mention the *will* of God?
57. What is the "word of truth"... i.e., where would you look to find it?
58. To whom does the word "firstfruits" refer?
59. "Firstfruits" borrows what significance from the Old Testament?

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 16. Don't let anyone fool you about the sources of good and evil.
  17. All good giving and every complete gift does not come from this earth, but from the Father who is the source of all light. He is always constant and doesn't change to day and night like this turning earth.
  18. It was His desire to give us a new birth by the gospel; that, like the firstfruits, we should be those given over to Him of all mankind.
- B.\*17. But whatever is good and perfect comes to us from God, the Creator of all light, and He shines forever without change or shadow.
  18. And it was a happy day for Him when he gave us our new lives, through the truth of His Word, and we became, as it were, the first children of His new family.

### *Summary*

Unlike the man with the fickle, wavering faith, God is the constant source of all good gifts. His quality never flickers nor changes, and this is evident by His will for us: That we could be born again into a new family, a family that totally belongs to Him.

### *Comment*

"Be not deceived", neither about sin nor about righteousness. In I Cor. 6:9 Paul warns not to be deceived about who shall enter into the kingdom of God. He names a number of "present tense" sinners (i.e., sinners who continue in their sin and will not repent) who shall not inherit the kingdom. In like manner, verse 16 refers back

to the way of temptation and sin that went before. But the warning also refers to the way of righteousness to follow. Man is so easily deceived about the true source of good. False reasoning, vain philosophies, poor logic, and inadequate science all lead man to think he has found the source of good in something other than the Father of lights. Thus, parents will encourage their children to prepare themselves to make money, as if money were the source of that which is good for the children. The children themselves will train themselves in the sciences of man, as if man's poor observations of things created will equip man to prepare for himself that which is good for him. In this science (man's limited observations) the children are often deceived into thinking they can find the answer to eternal questions, to the nature of God, to the beginning of the world, to the end of man, to the process of life and growth, to the source of light, to peace and understanding for man, to joy unspeakable, to glory, to hope, and to eternal life. Then in a few short years the fading body and inevitable death reveal the futility of science to answer the really important questions of life. With a wasted life, empty of good things, the disillusioned children come to the close of life empty handed of anything of permanent value. Success in accumulation of money, in politics and in social graces equally fades. How much better to receive the wisdom of God, to heed God's warning about riches, and to know for sure by His revelation the source of all good things and all goodness.

Like a two-edged sword, "Be not deceived" points both ways. One edge cutting the deception of false teachers and theologians regarding the nature of God and the source of good things; another edge cutting the deception and allurements of lust and sin. So Paul uses the expression: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Then note the two-edged warning against being deceived.) "For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life." (Gal. 6:7-8)

Deception is in the heart and mind, not just in the deed. Deception may result in action, but deception is itself within. The emphasis of James is upon right thinking. Wrong ideas will soon lead a man in wrong paths. Right thinking is the only basis of right living. Knowing God is not a guarantee against deception. James is here speaking to "my beloved brethren." We must continually be on our guard against anything that would lead us away from implicit confidence

in God. The elect of God are the subject of continual and subtle influences that would lead them astray, and many of God's children have been devoured of the devil because they consented to be deceived for a time. To embrace, even in our hearts, the things of this world as if they were the first love, is to walk the road of deception. No wonder God warns us that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. No wonder that God warns us against seeking after the things of this world. No wonder we are warned to seek our wisdom from God.

That God is the source of every good and perfect gift is sometimes disputed. Some translation here prefer "only", or "nothing but" for "every." *Every* is not only the preferred translation, but is also harmonious with other Scripture regarding the goodness of God. Some may argue that science can often be the source of good things for man. If science were absolutely true and accurate, it would be nothing more than a description and application of that which God created, and then God looked upon it and said: "It is good." That which is good, though it may appear to come from science, from earthly parents, from government; or from whatever source, is really from God. There is no good source except it be from God and ordained of God. To think otherwise is to be deceived.

The word "perfect" means complete, not sinless. The sinless nature of God's gifts is included in the expression "good gift." The completeness of God's gift is then accentuated by the expression "perfect gift." Some may point out the possibility of the "perfect" here being a repetition of the good gift just before, and thus perfect would seem to mean excluding sin. Of course, the thought is not objectionable, and is in complete harmony with all that God tells us about Himself. If perfect here means sinless, then this would be the one exception for the meaning of the word in the New Testament. Although the thought of "sinless gift" is not objectionable, it would seem the better exegesis to the Scriptural usage of the word: perfect gift=complete gift.

Father of lights is a beautiful and revealing expression concerning God. First, God can be said to be the Father of lights because he created light, and created the heavenly bodies that give light in this universe. (Gen. 1; Psalms 136:7) God is thereby the source of physical warmth, and food, and life. God is thereby the sustainer as well as the creator, for the heavenly bodies were not only created, but they continue in existence and in giving light. Second, God is the

Father of lights in that He is the source of spiritual light and blessing. This is the most important light, and seems to be the significance of references to God as the "light of the world." (see Psalms 36:9; John 1:1; 8:12; Psalms 27:1). Third, God is the Father of lights in that He is the *effulgent* source of light. Light may show through the Word of God, light may be reflected in the life of the Christian, and physical light may come from the stars; but all these simply reflect the light of God, the true source. (I John 1:5; Heb. 1:3).

The constancy of the Father of lights is also doubly emphasized. "With whom can be no variation" is in contrast with the unstable man described earlier. It may also be put in contrast with the mistaken sources of light men sometimes follow. Specifically, the noun "variation" refers to astronomical changes. Unlike the rising and setting of the sun (as we think of it), and unlike the waning and waxing of the moon, and possibly unlike the twinkling appearing and disappearing stars, God does not vary. His light is constant. His gifts are consistent.

The thought is further brought out in the expression "neither shadow that is cast by turning." Certainly this expression is an amplification of the former. Ropes suggest that the two phrases are a single expression, as "neither variation which consists of turning shadow." Either way, the thought is not altered. The moon, in its orbit about the earth, varies its light because of its turning shadow. With God, there is no such variation. Likewise, the sun is dim at sunrise, bright during the day, dim at sunset, and dark at night, because of the shadow of the turning earth. With God, this is not so. God's omnipresent light never fails, unlike the seasons, the length of days on the earth, and the changing planets.

Educators and students alike despair in their search for that which is constant and unchanging. The shortest distance between two points is now determined not always to be a straight line, and the most stable of mathematical and scientific axioms are found to be relative and unstable. The "Teddy boys" of England and the "Beat-nics" of New York are a living testimony of the lack of a "solid rock" on which they can build their lives and their philosophies. The search for stability is fruitless in philosophy, in mathematics, in science, in politics, and in education. But he who will build his life upon Christ Jesus; he who will put his confidence in God, this one



has a solid rock on which to build. In God one finds the Ultimate, and the only ultimate. God is the answer, and the only answer. Unshaking stability, unvarying light, unchanging personality, the same yesterday, today, and forever; this is God. From His throne flows peace like a river, and there is no other source. From His heart flows the purest "agape" love, and there is no other source. He is the rock of ages from whom comes the truth, and there is no other source. Praises be to Him, the author of every good gift and every perfect gift.

The thought of an unchanging God who does not fluctuate in His goodness towards man is further reinforced by pointing to the greatest blessing of all that flows from Him. Man is brought forth from sin and condemnation by the Word of Truth. Man can be begotten anew, born again with a fresh, sinless start and a new living heart. In contrast to the birth of sin (v. 15), here we see the birth of life. To be "brought forth" implies two states: (1) that from which one comes. . . . from sin, fruitlessness, disappointment, condemnation and despair; and (2) that to which one comes . . . to life everlasting, to joy unspeakable and full of glory, to peace that passes all understanding. The Word of Truth is the gospel of God's revelation through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, and through which God has ordained the world of men to be regenerated in Christ Jesus. No theory of the new birth is scriptural and accurate that does not involve the revelation of God in His word. How can they possibly be born again "except they hear"? To be born again by direct operation of the Holy Spirit, or by direct revelation from God, is not a Biblical idea. "The Word of Truth" is part of the unchanging scheme of redemption that originated with our God, who is unchanging Himself.

Further, we note that this "born again" scheme that offers complete goodness to man is of the will of God. The plan is His, and came from His heart's desire. Our salvation is the result of the deliberate choice of God. This plan He foreordained before the foundation of the world; and there is none other that can take a single ounce of credit for God's wonderful plan. All that is good comes from Him, and nothing that is evil comes from Him. For this reason those who choose God on His own terms become the choicest part of the harvest, "kind of like" the firstfruits of the Old Testament. (See Deut. 18:4; Num. 18:12; Ex. 13:11-16) Hence of all God's creatures, (probably referring only to man-creatures) the ones who are born again become the perfect "living sacrifice" offered up to God, and also be-

come an earnest of more fruit to follow, as they testify of Christ before the world of lost men.

## TO LISTEN IS BETTER THAN TO SPEAK

### *Text 1:19-21*

19. Ye know this, my beloved brethren, But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:
20. for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.
21. Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

### *Queries*

60. Should the first two phrases of verse 19 go with the portion that follows, or actually go with the statements that went before? (The clue is in the context. . . which did they already know?)
61. "Swift to hear" what?
62. "Slow to speak" what? (Is he speaking of hearing and speaking a specific thing, or giving general instruction for getting along with people? Note what follows immediately.)
63. To whom is the wrath of man in v. 20 directed? (Man, or God?)
64. Is the statement of v. 20 a general truth, or are there some notable exceptions to the rule?
65. Is "righteous indignation" the same as "wrath of man"?
66. Does "overflowing" of wickedness imply there can be some wickedness without having an overflow of it? (Note: King James has "superfluity of naughtiness.")
67. The "meekness" of verse 21 is contrasted with what other characteristic of personality in this section of Scripture?
68. What kind of word is an "implanted" word?

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 19. You already know it is better to be a good listener than a good speaker, dear brothers, and control your temper:
20. For an angry man is not doing what God wants him to do.
21. Therefore, strip off the filthy garments of sin and stop sin's

overflowing of wickedness upon you; gratefully receive the inborn word of God through which you have salvation.

- B.\*19. Dear brothers, don't ever forget that it is best to listen much, speak little, and not become angry;  
20. For anger doesn't make us good, as God demands that we must be.  
21. So get rid of all that is wrong in your life, both inside and outside, and humbly be glad for the wonderful message we have received, for it is able to save our souls as it grows in our hearts.

### *Summary*

We would get along better if we would learn to listen rather than giving vent to our anger, which is unrighteous, and should be put away along with all of sin's contamination. It is the only way we can have salvation through the word we have received in our hearts.

### *Comment*

The admonition to "be swift to hear" has several applications. The most obvious, however, is determined by the grammatical construction. The reference is general; that we learn more while listening than while speaking (v.21). Some may even include the speaking as a teacher in 3:1, which though permissible, does not seem to be the context here. Since "slow to speak" is coupled with "swift to hear", the two seem to be put in natural contrast. Since in v. 21 and 22 James speaks of hearing the word, some may feel the subject is introduced here: be swift to hear the Word of God. This is not likely, however, for the man would likewise be cautioned to be slow to speak to God; and quite obviously the anger described is directed toward man, not God.

Some may ponder what is known by the beloved brethren. J. W. Roberts seems to indicate James is saying: "Ye know this (that we are begotten by the Word of Truth) my beloved brethren, but (let me say something new), let every man be swift to hear, etc." James could also be saying, "Ye know this, but I shall say it anyway."

The wrath of v. 19 also seems to be ordinary anger, i.e., lack of self-control against one's brother, or against any man. This is quite

different from the righteous indignation one may have in sympathy with God's character and Divine will. Self-control seems to increase righteous indignation, but will overcome anger. Further, the statement of v. 20 makes clear the wrongness of the wrath herein mentioned.

The wrath of man is so obviously an enemy of personality, of reasoning, of attainment, that it seems superfluous to mention it here. Yet, James does mention it; and he does not drop the subject. The bulk of an entire chapter is spent on the misuse of the tongue. Perhaps, the fallacy of anger is obvious because it is so common. And yet, since it is so common, all the more we need the additional warning here. The high emotional state of one in intense anger makes reasoning almost impossible. Under the influence of this state of anger, one will often do and say things he will forever regret. Anger, which robs one of his reasoning and inhibition, can be as sinful as narcotics or alcohol, which does the same thing.

The admonition of James certainly does indicate that man can do something about his tendency to anger. By willpower and self-control one can, with the help of God, overcome most terrible habits in this loss of self-control. This is a subject that needs much teaching, much admonition, and certainly much self-control. One so afflicted should prayerfully seek help of the Lord. "But why," we may ask, "do people become angry so easily . . . especially when they know it is profitless?"

James seems to sense the question, for he answers it immediately in v. 21. Anger is most easily provoked when the inconsistencies of one's life is laid bare. When the wrongness of a man's action is made clear, that man will usually do one of two things: (1) He will repent, therefore correcting the wrong and ridding himself of the embarrassment of the inconsistency; or (2) He will become angry about the situation, thus dulling his reasoning capacity so that he no longer is facing the embarrassment. When deeds and conscience conflict, one may change the deeds or dull the conscience. Repentance changes the deeds. Anger dulls the reasoning capacity, thus the conscience. Often this is the psychology behind one who vigorously attacks the preacher, or behind one who is constantly fighting the church, or even angry with God. This accounts for the stoning of Stephen, and the Old Testament stoning of the prophets. In fact, it is the unrepented sins that crucified Jesus.

Consequently, the Godly way to rid oneself of the anger-pro-

voking situation is to repent. Putting away filthiness is the language of removing filthy clothing, or cleansing dirt from the body. The "superfluity of naughtiness" (King James) is weak here . . . For the naughtiness (wickedness) is wicked every drop. Any of the wickedness causes an overflowing of filth that needs removal. On this occasion "overflowing of wickedness" is the better reading. Any sin overflows and, like leaven, contaminates the whole.

The only alternative to this anger-provoking situation is to let God have His way . . . and the Sword of the Spirit cuts the sin which we willingly remove from our lives; and hence our souls are saved!

### LISTENING IS POINTLESS WITHOUT DOING

*Text 1:22-25*

- 1:22. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves.
23. For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror:
24. for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.
25. But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing.

#### *Queries*

69. Explain how hearing without doing is actually "deluding" oneself.
70. What is the "natural" face?
71. The natural face and the mirror represent what concerning the man who hears and does not?
72. How is the New Testament the "perfect law"? (Remember the Biblical meaning of the word "perfect.")
73. Why would the New Testament be called the "law of liberty?"
74. Since the word "law" is here used in describing the Word of God, could it be that James is speaking of the Old Testament law, and not of the New? How do you know?
75. In what way may Christianity be referred to as a law?
76. Since the doer must work, is not James teaching salvation by works?

*Paraphrases*

- A. 22. You fool yourselves if you listen to the Word of God but don't obey it.
23. For if this is what you are doing, you are like a man looking at his physical face in a mirror;
24. who sees himself but immediately departs without remembering what he saw.
25. But he that continues to see himself described clearly in the New Testament and, unlike the man above, proceeds to do something about what he sees, shall be blessed for his action.
- B.\*22. And remember, it is a message to obey, not just to listen to. So don't fool yourselves:
23. For if a person just listens and doesn't obey, he is like a man looking at his face in a mirror;
24. As soon as he walks away, he can't see himself anymore or remember what he looks like.
25. But if he keeps looking steadily into God's law for free men he will not only remember it, but do what it says, and God will greatly bless that man in everything he does.

*Summary*

A man fools himself who thinks there is profit in reading the Word of God without doing what it says. But if a man continues to read the Word and conforms himself to what he reads, God will bless his action.

*Comment*

Self-deception is a means of cheating oneself. The desire to believe a lie is behind self-deception. "And why," one may ask, "does a person wish to believe a lie?" Because the truth hurts, and we do not like to be hurt. This particular deception is ironic in that it is so obvious in others, and yet so hard to detect in ourselves. The secret is desire. If we love a sin or a wrong doing, with reluctance we examine it in the light of God's Word. Once having seen what it really is in God's sight, we are caught in a dilemma: for the Word

of God and our conscience say *no*, and our desire says *yes*. We can either reform our desire and continue with the Word of God, or we can engage in a bit of mental gymnastics that reasons: "This is an interesting bit of advice but, of course, it doesn't apply to me." When we do the latter, we promptly turn from the Word of God (It makes us uncomfortable!) and dismiss it from our mind. The rationalization involved may be quite complicated, or it may be as simple as that above. In either case, the result is that we have deluded ourselves into believing a lie . . . a lie so obvious that anyone else can see through it easily; but we, in blissful self-chosen ignorance, continue with our dirty sin no longer knowing that it stinks in the sight of God and in the nostrils of men.

Self-deception, ignorance, and conceit go hand in hand. We have already pointed out that one who prefers to be ignorant of God's truth will deceive himself; and one who deceives himself will become ignorant of the truth he once understood. Galatians 6:3 points out that conceit is very closely related. "For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." Either directly or indirectly, a man will boost his own ego in order to rationalize his action to the point of complete ignorance of God's will. The whole process, of course, is self-deception. Puffed up with our inflated opinion of ourselves, we arrogantly ignore God's plain words regarding our action, explaining our disobedience to ourselves in such a way that our conscience will be eased and we can forget what we read.

Oh, beloved brother . . . how do *you* read God's Word? Is the Word of God a pattern by which your life is adjusted and governed? Is God's will for your philosophy, or for your life? Do you find His commandments grievous, and His will contrary to your own? Do you rejoice to go back to God's Word again and again to determine His will for your life, or do you prefer to read and forget? Do you prefer to argue the Word with others about peripheral interpretations and matters that do not pertain to your own personal life? Can it be that you need to see James 1:16-27 as your own personal mirror, and read it again and again; then on your knees before God ask for His help in making the proper adjustment in your life?

The natural face we see in a mirror of silver, copper or tin is the same face that other men see when they look at us. The "natural face" is here the face given to each person by physical birth and natural growth; hence, the physical face, or the "face that nature

gave him." (Ropes) The face we see in the mirror of God is our spiritual appearance . . . not primarily as we appear to others, but rather as we appear to God. Therein we see our soul as God sees us. We may not like it, in fact we are not expected to like it. . . . Therefore we turn to God for help in making it over. We seek to be born again so that God can make us what we ought to be. This involves far more than a change in desire and spirit . . . it involves a change in deeds and action. Since there is no earning power in the deeds, the deeds without the converted heart earn us absolutely nothing in God's sight. Yet the "converted" heart that does not change the deeds and life of the individual is not converted in the manner that God wants. The total conversion involves deeds as well as desires.

The "perfect law, the law of liberty" is obviously the gospel of Christ which sets us free. This is the same Word of Truth that makes us new creatures (1:18). Yet, why will it be called a "law" here? The point of emphasis is that it must govern our lives and deeds, and this is the primary function of "law." Hence, the New Testament is a law in that it is a pattern for my life and a guide for my deeds. It is not a law in the sense of the Old Testament law . . . wherein a person earns wages and receives what he earns. In the gospel "law," I govern my life and conform to God's wishes, but I do not receive what I earn. I am a sinner, I have earned death . . . eternal death. Christ fulfilled the law in that He received what I earned, thus I do not take upon myself the "just recompense" for my deeds. Rather, I receive eternal life and joy and peace, none of which I have earned. Christianity is therefore a way of life (law) founded on faith (belief) in Christ which bestows upon me the grace (free gift) of salvation. (For other references of the New Testament as law, see John 13:34; Rom. 3:27; I Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2; I John 2:7 ff.)

## VAIN AND PURE RELIGION CONTRASTED

### *Text 1:26-27*

26. If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain.
27. Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this,



to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world,

### *Queries*

77. The faith and works (hearing and doing) of the previous passages are summed up in a single word in verse 26. Which word is it?
78. These two verses tie very closely with verse 19. Wherein is the tie?
79. Explain how a man with a run-a-way tongue has deceived his heart.
80. What does the word "pure" mean? How can it modify "religion?"
81. Does v. 27 describe a full definition of religion?
82. If not, what is lacking?
83. We who can call God "our Father" stand in open contrast with something else in this verse. What is it?
84. What is the meaning of "unspotted"? i.e., what is it that can spot the Christian? Spotted with what?
85. What is "the world" as it is used here?
86. Verse 26 speaks of the possibility of a "vain" religion. What is a vain religion?

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 26. A man with a run-a-way tongue is deceiving himself if he thinks he is religious. Such a religion would be of no profit to him.
27. A clean religion that stands without accusation before God includes the visiting of suffering orphans and widows, and the keeping of oneself free from the sinful desires and deeds of this life.
- B.\* 26. If anyone says he is a Christian but doesn't control his sharp tongue, he is just fooling himself and his religion isn't worth much.
27. The Christian who is pure and without fault, from God the Father's point of view, is the one who takes care of

orphans and widows, and whose soul remains true to the Lord—not soiled and dirtied by its contacts with the world.

### *Summary*

A man also fools himself who has both religion and a wild tongue. A profitable religion is one that causes a man to keep himself free from sin and also helps others who have need, rather than slaying them with his tongue.

### *Comment*

The religious man is here one who worships; both with the heart and with acts of worship. Applied to the Christian, this would describe the ardent church-goer who professes himself to be a Christian through prayer, worship, and Bible study. Yet all this does not bring profit to the man. James has just previously stated that all this without a life of *doing* the will of Christ would bring no profit. Now, he adds that all this without controlling the tongue would also spoil his religion. Even as worship without the deeds of Christ is a means of fooling oneself, so worship with a sharp tongue is also a means of self-deception.

James has already mentioned the subject of unwise use of the tongue in v. 19 "let every man be slow to speak." Now he returns to the subject with renewed vigor, and he will not drop the matter here! Surely this must be one of the greatest and most wide-spread weaknesses of human nature. No doubt there was reason for the special emphasis in the churches that received James' epistle. And what church today does not yet need the same emphasis? Is not this another proof that human nature has not changed? Each of us may have particular sins that do easily beset us, yet this one sin of misusing the tongue we all understand. James expands the subject in chapter 3, and no wonder!

The particular verb used in describing the controlled tongue suggests the bridling of a wild horse. Again, James by inference introduces a figure he shall describe more fully later on.

The self-deception involved in the misuse of the tongue is an interesting thought. A man, secure in the conviction that his religion and his worship is acceptable with God, will grow all the more vehement with his tongue-slaughter. Like Moses, if he is not careful, he

will sit on the throne of God and pass both judgment and sentence on his fellow man; personally seeing to it that the sinners that surround him will get the tongue-lashing they "deserve." And the deception feeds itself! The more he lashes and cuts and destroys, the more like God he feels; until finally the very air reeks with his presence and all men tremble at the sound of his voice. It seems that some tongues will only be stilled when their owners face God in the judgment!

This is not intended to be a complete definition of religion. The worship implied by the very word "religion" is a vital part of Christianity. Complete surrender to Christ, a faith in Him that will go all the way, a compliance to the scheme of redemption He has designed Himself, is all necessary to true worship. James is not here talking of these things. He has mentioned two things that will make a man's religion vain: The lack of good action, and the uncontrolled tongue. The opposite of these two is the unspotted life and the helpful attitude towards those in need. James is thus showing the two extremes in these two matters.

Vain Religion	vs.	Pure and Undeified Religion
Religion without action. (v. 22, 23, 24, 25)	vs.	Doers of the word, unspotted from the world. (v. 23, 27)
Religion with an uncontrolled tongue. (v. 19, 26)	vs.	Sympathetic help for those in need. (v. 27)

These two comparisons have to do with human relationships. Omitted are the divine relationships. A full definition of pure religion would, of course, include this.

Interesting also to note is the interplay between the "fatherless" and those of us who can appeal to "our Father." We who have a heavenly Father to whom we can appeal should feel all the more sympathy to those who have not the advantage of an earthly father. Of course, our sympathy for those who know not our heavenly Father would be all the greater. Far from the desire to cut and lash with our tongue, we would desire to win them to Christ, to love them for the Father's sake, and to lead them to what they could be rather than cursing them for what they are.

Not to be slighted is the picture of the man spotted by the sinful slush of this world. The young man, with his car polished clean and white, asked if he could park it in front of the house. "You may

park that pretty car there is you wish" was the reply, "but you won't drive it away!" Thinking the matter some kind of a joke, the car was left parked. Three hours later the young man returned to find his car covered with great gobs of black mud. He had parked his car by two mud-filled holes in the pavement, and passing cars had done the rest. Yes, friend; you are free in Christ. You may park that lily-white carcass of yours by the sinful chugholes of this world if you wish . . . but you will not be lily-white for long! If we could only realize that it is not just for His good pleasure that God warns us . . . but for *our benefit!*

## SERMON OUTLINES

### HOW TO LISTEN TO A SERMON James 1:20-25

Introduction: If a sermon is wasted, the time gone is multiplied by every person who fails to hear. If 100 people fail to hear one half-hour sermon, 50 man-hours are wasted!

Proposition: How to *really hear* the sermon so as to get the most out of it.

#### I. PREPARE YOURSELF TO HEAR v. 21a

- A. Get ready physically. Proper rest, preparation the day before. The state of your physical body has much to do with your spiritual attitude.
- B. Get ready intellectually.
  1. Lay aside worries (Unpaid bills, Sunday dinner, etc.)
  2. Determine in your heart you will listen. (Plan it!)
  3. Prepare to take notes. (Have Bible, paper, pen ready)
- C. Get ready spiritually.
  1. Lay apart filthiness (All ungodly attitudes).
  2. Pray beforehand.
  3. Expect something big in your own heart ("Sir, we would see Jesus.")

#### II. HOW TO HEAR THE SERMON v. 21b

##### A. RECEIVE IT

1. Pay attention to what is said.
2. Take careful notes.

3. Ask yourself pertinent questions as you hear.
4. Listen critically, determining whether or not what you hear is true according to the Scripture. (Acts 17:11)

B. SUBMIT TO IT

1. With the spirit of meekness. (Receiving it *yourself*, not expecting it to hit your neighbor.)
2. Expect the sword to cut. (That is the purpose of the Sword of the Spirit)

C. UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE

1. The stakes are high (Salvation, preservation, purification, growth.)
2. Hear in order to do (v. 22).
3. Hearers only are self-deceivers.

III. PROPER USE OF THE WORD (v. 23-25)

- A. See ourselves as we really are.
- B. Clean up, buck up, pick up, grow up. (We must or we are lost!)
- C. Be ye reconciled to God.

HUMAN AND DIVINE WRATH James 1:20

Proposition: What is the difference between human and Divine wrath, and what should our attitude be toward both?

I. HUMAN WRATH worketh not the righteousness of God.

A. What excites human wrath?

1. Selfishness. (Desiring that for which we have no right)
2. Vanity. (Thinking more highly of myself than I should.)
3. Impatience (Not awaiting the right time, nor the due season).

B. What form does human wrath take?

1. Excited emotion (or passion).
2. Irrationality (I Sam. 25:17).
3. Violence (Peter cutting off the guard's ear).

C. What follows human wrath?

1. Undignified behavior (Foolish, Prov. 14:17; folly, Prov. 14:29).
2. Sin (Even to the point of ruined lives . . . Prov. 29:22)

3. Blasphemy (vain and vile speech; taking the Lord's name in vain).

## II. DIVINE WRATH does the righteousness of God.

- A. What excites Divine wrath?
  1. All unrighteousness and ungodliness (Rom. 1:18).
  2. Usurpation of God's authority (Eph. 5:6; John 3:36).
  3. All that destroys God's work. (Thus joining the "beast" Rev. 14:10)
- B. How is it manifested?
  1. Not in heated passion.
  2. In calm, deliberate judgment.
- C. How does it operate?
  1. In longsuffering (II Pet. 3:11).
  2. In condemnation
  3. In judgment.
  4. In eternal destruction
- D. What the effect upon man?
  1. God's hate for sin is established.
  2. God's Word is vindicated.
  3. God's power and authority is demonstrated.

## III. OUR ATTITUDE toward Divine and human wrath should be what?

- A. Toward human wrath . . .
  1. Avoid it except where impossible (Rom. 12:17).
  2. Control it. (Prov. 16:32).
  3. Heed the Scriptures (Follow God's example and let your wrath work righteousness!).
- B. Toward Divine wrath . . .
  1. Recognize the possibility.
  2. Fear it
  3. Avoid bringing it upon yourself
  4. Seek the Righteousness of God.

CONCLUSION: Man's wrath worketh sin;  
God's wrath works against sin

## *TWELVE SERMON TITLES WITH THREE-POINT OUTLINES*

### THE SOURCE OF ALL GOOD THINGS 1:16-18

1. Good and perfect gifts come from above. v. 17.

2. Good and perfect gifts come from the Father, v. 17.
3. All good and perfect gifts are the will of the Father, v. 18.

**WHAT EVERY MAN KNOWS 1:19-20**

1. Everybody loves a good listener.
2. Think twice before you speak.
3. Count to ten when anger comes.

**TO LISTEN IS BETTER THAN TO SPEAK 1:19-21**

1. A fast-to-speak person easily expresses wrath.
2. A fast-to-hear person more easily hears God's Word.
3. To confuse the above is to deceive ourselves.

**EMPTY IT BEFORE YOU FILL IT 1:21**

1. Empty your life of filthiness.
2. Fill your life with the Word.
3. And your soul shall be saved.

**RECEIVING THE WORD OF GOD 1:21**

1. Hearing with the attitude of meekness.
2. Implant it in your heart.
3. Through it your soul is saved.

**THE GREAT DELUSION 1:22-24**

1. Having enough for the appearance of reality (Hearing the Word).
2. Short enough to miss the real thing (Not doing the Word).
3. Desiring enough to be deceived (Deluding yourself).

**VAIN AND PURE RELIGION CONTRASTED 1:26-27**

1. Harm to fellow man makes religion vain, v. 26.
2. Good to fellow man is pure religion, v. 27a.
3. Freedom from spots of sin is pure religion, v. 27b.

**BEHOLD YOURSELF 1:23-25**

1. Yourself as others see you (Your natural face.)
2. Yourself as God sees you (Your spiritual self.)
3. Yourself as redeemed by the blood of the Lamb (Continuing in the law of liberty.)

## ITS EASY TO FORGET 1:22-26

1. What manner of man you really are. v. 24.
2. That an evil tongue can spoil good deeds. v. 26.
3. That you must *do* as well as *hear*. v. 22.

## VAIN RELIGION 1:26

1. Caused when a man falsely thinks himself to be religious.
2. Caused when a man bridles not his tongue.
3. Caused when a man deceives his own heart.

## PURE RELIGION 1:27

1. Before God: it is undefiled.
2. Before man: it helps those in need.
3. Before self: it is unspotted from sin.

*SPECIAL STUDY*

## ALIVE AND FREE IN CHRIST

*A Brief Consideration of Galatians 5:13-26*

Alive means to be joined. Freedom means to be loosed. It appears that they mean the opposite. To be alive in this world means the body is joined to the spirit. To be alive in Christ means our Spirit is joined to Christ. "Alive," that is, joined to Christ, and "Free" in Christ at the same time! It may seem strange, but true it is. The only way to be free indeed is to be alive in Christ. The love of sin so commits and binds our affections that it appears man can do nothing else than sin. The practice of sin forms chains so strong that man is completely shackled by his own evil deeds. Sin's consequences in the next existence after this earth are so clearly described in God's Book that they cannot be correctly denied. Sin's results in this life are evident on every hand, and in every person. Surely the binding is so irrevokable that man, psychologically confined by the guilt of his own sin, cries out for release.

And God in the person of Christ our Lord has given that release. Through His love for us, our prison of the love of sin is changed to the love of Christ. Our confinement to the practice of sin is changed by conversion, (i.e., repentance) to Christ Jesus. The terrible consequences of sin, eternal death, are changed by the new



birth in Christ to eternal life with Him forever. Surely, we have been freed! "But this is only part of our prison," you may argue.

Even in Christ man is limited. Man is limited by the power and authority of God. Man is limited by his existence in time . . . and it seems so short when the journey is finished! Man is limited by space, and can never in this life hope to escape the solar system to which he is confined. Man is limited by his environmental circumstances. He cannot help, and is not responsible for the color of his skin, the place of his birth, the conditions of the home of his childhood . . . yet every one of these influence his life! Man is limited by his own fleshly body and is constantly having to alter that which he wishes to do to conform to that which he *can* do.

You may then argue: "Since man, a Christian man, is bound by these things . . . how then is man *free* in Christ? The first two verses of our text answer this question for us. Let us examine them:

Galatians 5:13,14—"For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only *use* not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

We are called unto liberty . . . by love serving one another. We are free to be a voluntary slave! "How then is slavery freedom?" you may ask. It is freedom, because I am a slave by choice. I am called into liberty: a life of love. I voluntarily serve God, because I love God. I love God because He first loved me. The non-christian may ask: "Then if you *must* serve God, is this not slavery? Is it not being bound?" Yes, I am bound to Christ . . . but you don't understand. You see, I *choose* to be bound to Christ. The action of the Jew in the Old Testament was governed by Requirement of the law. The action of the Christian, now, is controlled by his love for his fellow man. The Old Testament Jew was the old man sin, forced to govern his action because of the binding force of the law. The New Testament Christian is a *new creature in Christ*. . . Born again, voluntarily governing his action because he is born again of God's kind of love. The Christian, in serving God and his fellow man, *is doing precisely what he wants to do*.

You see, as a new-born saint of God, I am free . . . free to do *exactly* what I wish—for *exactly* what I wish is to serve Christ! My will is His will, for my will is surrendered completely to Him. Thus,

with Christ's love in my heart, I voluntarily serve my God and my neighbor. No wonder the Scriptures state,

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Gal. 5:14.

To fulfill does not mean to destroy—but rather to complete (to fill up, or fill full). Thus if the law is fulfilled, it is accomplished. Not because the law requires it, but because the love of Christians makes them *want* to do it. So the requirements of the law are fulfilled by love. This very principle itself is taken directly from the Old Testament:

"Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD." Lev. 19:18.

"You mean, you may ask, "That Christians never attack one another? You mean they keep the good deeds of the law out of the *love* principle, and they never misbehave?" No! This is not what I mean. Christians may bite and snarl at one another like animals. But if they are true Christians, this is not what they want, and they regret it from the depths of their hearts. Look at verse 15:

"But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." Gal. 5:15.

When you bite and devour your brother, you are destroying and consuming him. As a Christian who loves his brother, this is precisely what you do *not* want. Your flesh may even demand that you sin, but the real *you* inside, wants to please God.

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Gal. 5:16-17.

Man must fulfill something. If you serve Christ in love, you will fulfill the law. If you do sinful things, you fulfill the lust of the flesh. Which will you fulfill? The law, or lust of the flesh? The *only* way to fulfill the law is by the loving spirit of Christ in you. People under the law could not fulfill the law. Christ fulfilled the law; and we, through Him, continue to fulfill the law. But this new spirit within us does often oppose the appetites of the flesh, which continue right or wrong!

"But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law." Gal. 5:18.

I am not bound by the binding force of legal obligations and re-

quirements, but yet my life is more successfully controlled! You see, I'm in love! The object of my affection is Jesus Christ, and *by choice* I do not want to displease Him, for I love Him. (If I want to displease Him, then there is something wrong with my love!)

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Gal. 5:19-21.

These sins are obvious desires of the flesh. If I do not have desires to please Jesus, then these fleshly desires may be all that is left. How tragic are the thousands who know not Jesus and live continually after only these fleshly, sensuous pleasures! They know nothing of the fruit of Christ. They have no knowledge of God's kind of love! They cannot even understand freedom in Christ . . . freedom to walk after the life of the Spirit.

These next items are the things a Christian *wants*. These are not laws that inhibit, but fruits that result from identifying with the Spirit. See how this freedom applies to the fruits of the Spirit.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Gal. 5:22-23.

Notice that the first fruit is love. By this, we are motivated to produce all the other fruits. Notice also, that the last fruit is temperance . . . i.e. self-control. Real self-control is possible through love. Partial self-control may be enforced by law, but this is misery if it is against the person's heart-desire. If you *love* to do that which the law states, then the law is not an objectionable control force to you, but merely a statement of that which you want and intend to do. The word *meekness* does not mean to be weak and submissive, but rather a spirited war horse filled with energy and life that responds to the will of his master with all the energy at his command.

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Gal. 5:24.

Old man sin is dead. Our new creature does not agree with the fleshly appetites. Yes, we are still in the flesh, but the flesh has a

new master: the loving spirit of Christ within. The flesh can no longer get its way. We are alive in the spirit.

\*\*\*"Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." Gal. 5:26.

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Gal. 5:25.

If I as a Christian walk in the flesh and not the spirit, I become miserable. I then do that which I do not wish to do, and I am torn with remorse and disgust. When I walk in the Spirit . . . i.e., I do the things the Holy Spirit desires, then I am *elated* in Christ. I have the peace that passes all understanding. Because I am good? *No* I am not good . . . but Christ, who is in me, in whom and for whom I live . . . *he is good*. "Let us" again implies that this walk is a matter of our will and that God wants us to so walk because we freely choose to so walk. Mr. Burke put it this way: "Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites."

\*\*Galatians 5:26.

To think that I myself must be glorified brings contention and envy. To put the glory on Christ, where it belongs, is the way of joy and freedom of spirit. To sum it up we might say that the will of Christ expressed in the New Testament is my command . . . because I choose to be commanded by His Spirit. Since this is my choice, then the governing of my life goes beyond the expressed will of Christ in the New Testament. I will voluntarily conform my life to what I determine to be the will of Christ even though I do not find that will clearly stated in New Testament words. Thus, the "borderline" sins of this life, though they may tempt me, present no problem to my heart's desire . . . to my inner man . . . to the "new born" *creature*.

But if I am not born again and have not the Spirit of Christ within, then Christ's will is not my will; and I find the New Testament expressions of the will of Christ to be commandments that would hedge me in against my will. Even the New Testament becomes to me a law that would hinder me from doing the things I want to do.

The New Testament, to the unconverted, is a legal pen, a law system that inhibits the actions of man and keeps him from doing what he wants to do. To him the New Testament is distasteful, and moreover, is impossible as a legal system—impossible, for the "commandments" therein are beyond the commandments of the

Old Testament. And man stands condemned before God, for his unconverted heart makes the New Testament to him a law—a law that *must* be kept, against his will—a law that not only would restrict his desires, but a law that condemns because he has not obeyed and cannot obey.

To be born again is to be alive. Life is to be joined to Christ. His will becomes my will. His will in the New Testament is an expression of what I intend and want to do because it is His will. Consequently I am free to do exactly what I want to do: The Will of Christ. The same Christ is either my hope and salvation and joy, or a stumbling stone and the author of a system of commandments. It all depends on my relationship to Him. Alive, and free in Christ—or dead, and hedged about by a perfect legal system.

## CHAPTER IV

## OVER-RATED RICHES

James 2:1-13

*Introduction*

The ability to accumulate riches, in the minds of many people, seems to qualify any man for any position. Even though the acquisition of riches usually goes with oppression of the poor, purchased political power, and arrogant flaunting of both the laws of God and man, it seems that riches enhance a man's prestige and popularity, whether in politics or in the church. This tendency to honor the rich often results in honoring principles that are contrary to the principles of God and completely opposing all Christian warfare. This tendency to give undue honor to a man just because he is rich becomes a temptation to the saint within the church; and if carried far enough, can completely stifle the church's growth and progress.

Although there is clearly nothing wrong with being rich, there may be plenty wrong with the method of becoming rich; and the riches themselves can become the most terrible curse to befall a man. It is against this arrogance that tempts the rich that God speaks. It is against this method of oppression that makes a man rich that God speaks. It is against over-rating riches and thus under-rating all spiritual values that God warns. *It is* the love of money that is the root of all kinds of evil, says the Lord; and this constitutes a form of idolatry as adulterous in God's sight as falling down before the dumb stone idols. Of all this the Christian must be constantly aware, lest his tendency to over-evaluate money and what money can buy completely blind him to the true riches from God. Treasures in heaven do not consist of things that decay, made with hands and purchased with money.

Special honor and over-recognition of the man who gives a fraction of one percent of his income to buy the church a new carpet often results in complete disdain to the man who gives of his life's service to keep that same rug clean, gives fifteen percent of his income to keep the lights burning over that rug on Sunday night, and gives his heart to Jesus Christ and his life in complete

surrender. Over-honoring the man who purchased the rug may result in discouraging the sinful man whose feet should walk over that same rug to surrender his heart to Jesus. That rug may look very beautiful stretched down the expanse of the building's isle, but it may also cover a lot of filth and dirt underneath which should be swept out of the presence of the saints. Over-rating riches and the things that riches can buy is a sin, which is in competition with God Himself.

### *Outline*

Special respect to the rich at the expense of the poor and needy is a temptation within the church; for both the rich and the poor are under the same condemnation for disobedience, and both need salvation by grace from the same Savior.

TEMPTATION IN THE CHURCH 2:1-4.

WHY OVER-RATING RICHES IS A SIN 2:5-9.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES 2:10-13.

### TEMPTATION IN THE CHURCH

#### *Text 2:1-4*

1. My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.
2. For if there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing;
3. and ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing, and say, Sit thou here in a good place; and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool;
4. do ye not make distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

#### *Queries*

87. What contrast is implied in the title of Jesus: "Lord of glory?"

88. Is not the greatest of God's creation man himself? Then what is wrong with holding "respect of persons?"
89. There is some dispute as to whether the Greek text intends this first verse to be imperative or interrogative. In our quoted text, it is imperative. How would it be expressed as interrogative?
90. To whom is this specific instruction addressed?
91. What is a "synagogue?" (We might note that the same word can also be translated *assembly* or *meeting*.)
92. "A gold ring and fine clothing" is descriptive of what?
93. What is "vile clothing?"
94. Should we have any regard for the rich man, or should we completely disdain him because of his riches? (Think carefully before you answer.)
95. Just who, in verse 3, is saying "Sit thou here . . .?"
96. Would it be more proper to ask the poor man to sit, and the rich man to stand or sit under a footstool?
97. What would be a proper solution to the problem in verse 3?
98. What is the significance of "sitting under a footstool?"
99. What does the R.V. margin say instead of "do ye not make distinctions?"
100. Is this distinction "between yourselves" a disagreement between people within the church, or a generally divided mind the group as a whole holds?
101. What is evil about these thoughts of distinctions?

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 2:1 My brothers, do not make a class distinction to the rich in matters pertaining to the faith of Jesus, who Himself should have the first glory of everyone.
2. For if a man, obviously wealthy because of his dress and trappings, should come into your assembly; and another man, obviously poor because of his shabby clothing, should also come;
3. And you show prejudice by saying to the rich man, "Here, sir, take this good seat," and you say to the poor man, "Hey you, stand over there;" or "You can sit on the edge of the platform;"



4. Do you not have a prejudiced judgement that comes from an evil money-desire within yourself?
- B.\*2:1 Dear brothers, how can you claim that you belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, if you show favoritism to rich people and look down on poor people?
2. If a man comes into your church dressed in expensive clothes and with valuable gold rings on his fingers, and at the same moment another man comes in who is poor and dressed in threadbare clothes,
  3. And you make a lot of fuss over the rich man and give him the best seat in the house and say to the poor man, "You can stand over there if you like, or else sit on the floor"—well,
  4. This kind of action casts a question mark across your faith—(are you really a Christian at all?)—and shows that you are guided by evil motives.

### *Summary*

Class distinction between the rich and the poor because of the Christian's over-emphasis of the importance of money is caused by evil intentions.

### *Comment*

Because of the particular grammatical construction in the original language, it is impossible to determine whether or not the first sentence is intended to be a question or a command. The context however, gives us more of a clue. The imperative form, "Hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons," reads more smoothly with the beginning of the second sentence. . . . "For if there come," etc. It also seems quite evident that James knows of instances where such undue prejudiced views are actually held so that the simple asking of a question does not have the force the explanation which follows, demands.

The "faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" is an expression that here encompasses all Christianity. Hence, "in Christian matters show no favoritism because of wealth." That we should give special honor and glory to an individual because he has been "blessed" with

wealth, is incompatible with all Christian teaching. The special title given to the Christ is an indirect but powerful argument for this very point. Christ is "the Lord of glory," the one in whom all saints should glory. How careful must we be lest we substitute glory in material possessions for His glory, and so by example and honor worship the "golden calf", or at best worship God "through" the "golden calf."

The incompatibility of receiving wealth with special favor in the church with Christianity, is in harmony with many other incompatible circumstances. For instance, one cannot "love God and hate his fellow man," I John 4:20. Likewise, one cannot "lift up the face" of wealth at the same time that we glory in the Lord Jesus. In so doing we should be combining faith in Jesus with the wrong attitude toward the poor. Since poverty is often the means God uses to open a person's eyes to his special need of Jesus, we should be especially careful not to disdain or humiliate a person in poverty-stricken circumstances. The Old Testament admonished, "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor." (Lev. 19:15).

Neither must we humiliate the rich by ignoring him, nor humiliate the poor by disdaining him. We can respect God's noblest creation, man, without showing undue regard for something of such minor consequence as money.

The illustration used of the Holy Spirit seems to have included irony for the sake of emphasis. One might even say that the look of admiration and the offering of a particular kind of *seat* in verse 3 is a sarcastic note, so obviously illustrated as to point out the humorous absurdity of the situation. Yet, when we realize the illustration is true to form in many instances, the seriousness of the matter overrides the humor; i.e., "it would be funny if it were not so serious." When we see it in print, it appears absurd. When it happens to us, it is unjust. When we are the authors of the situation, then it seems a real temptation and problem. God sees the matter from all viewpoints.

The person speaking is not identified in v. 3. It could be anyone who is showing special regard to the extent of "snobbery" of the more unfortunate. It could be the usher who is the church-appointed representative to politely greet all visitors with equal and just respect. It could be one of the church officers who by virtue of

his position may represent the attitude of the entire congregation. Thus, the shoe has many sizes and fits many congregations.

The discourteous attitude of ignoring the poor man, or asking him to stand while offering a fine seat to the wealthy, or asking him to "sit under my footstool" is especially humiliating since the man cannot help the circumstances that apparently cause the discourtesy. To make a man suffer humiliation because of circumstances beyond his control is so completely unjust that the Christian, of all people, should recognize the inconsistency with Christianity. We might add that the illustration encompasses enough to cover many other current situations. In one particular congregation, the minister was putting on a special money-raising drive. He had prepared a large blackboard that covered a huge section of the front of the auditorium. At the top of the board in large letters was printed: \$1,000.00 *or over*. Beneath this in slightly smaller letters with more space were the words: \$500.00 TO \$1,000.00. Then beneath this, with at least a dozen spaces, were the letters: \$100.00 to \$500.00. Finally, at the very bottom, in very small letters, were the words: \$10 and under. Under this space was room for at least a hundred names in very small print. One young man was so impressed with the campaign that thirty-five years later he still remembered how the one millionaire's name was printed at the top of the board in large, black, bold letters. The name of the young man's father, together with a hundred others, was printed in small letters at the bottom of the board. The young man's father was a poor carpenter, and his \$10 gift was a real sacrifice!

The "do ye not make distinctions" of v. 4 might also be translated: "Are ye not divided in your own mind." (A.S.V. margin). Some might argue that the church was divided in this practice, some wanting to honor the rich and others seeing the impropriety of it. They might say, such a practice would divide the church, causing contention. More likely, the division-thought is within the mind of the "church" as a whole. i.e., there is a sharp distinction between that which the Christians think and profess at one time and what they practice at another time. Thus, the division is the inconsistency between what the Christian *knows* to be right and what he *does* when the rich and poor are present. It is a form of wavering like the waves of the sea, or doubting with a lack of faith, or hesitating between two desires.

The Saints who so conduct themselves are said to be "judges

with evil thoughts." The evil thought is descriptive of the judge, hence they are "evil-thinking judges." Jesus said, "For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts." Matt. 15:19. "Wherein," you may ask, "is the evil?" For one thing, God is the judge and He judges according to the inner man and the heart. Man cannot know the heart; and even in the case of inappropriate action, man can only determine the heart by the action. God *knows* the heart. Second, the basis of judgment is completely unjust, that on the basis of possessions and dress and wealth we should show partiality. Third, it may be that the motives of this judgment are completely evil. Money-worship, adoration of things that perish, and subtle planning to obtain gifts and favors for honor bestowed would be particularly obnoxious to God.

### WHY OVER-RATING RICHES IS SIN

#### *Text 2:5-9*

- 2:5 Hearken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him?
6. But ye have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment seats?
7. Do not they blaspheme the honorable name by which ye are called?
8. Howbeit if ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well:
9. But if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors.

#### *Queries*

102. Note the four words with which James opens the reasoning here. What is different about this and the manner of opening chapter 2?
103. Did God choose the poor who did not choose God? *What* poor are here chosen?
104. If God chooses those who are being saved, how can we encourage everyone to choose God?

105. What kind of poverty do these poor have? Of spirituality? Of spiritual blessing? Of material possessions?
106. God chose them to be "rich in the faith." Does this mean that though they were poor before they became Christians, that now God will give them material riches since they are in the faith? If not, what does it mean?
107. If the kingdom of God is the church on earth (Mark 1:15; 4:11; Luke 8:10; Mark 9:1; 14:25; 9:27; 17:21, etc.), then how does it appear the saints are still "heirs of the kingdom?"
108. Although v. 5 expressly states that these saints are "chosen," what *within this verse* definitely proves that these chosen ones do the choosing themselves?
109. In v. 6 the text says "dishonored." What word is here used in the A.V.?
110. How do we know these rich people were not Christians?
111. What kind of oppression or persecution of v. 6 is most likely? Persecution of people because they are Christians? What other reasons are possible?
112. What are "judgment seats?"
113. What is the difference between "blaspheme" and "revile?"
114. What is the honorable name of v. 7?
115. State the "royal law."
116. Why does James refer to the royal law?
117. Since the royal law is contained in the O. T. (Lev. 19:18), why does James infer that the saints do well to keep it now?
118. Explain how "respect of persons" violates the royal law.
119. Relate 1:13 and 1:26 with verses 8 & 9.

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 5. Listen, my beloved brothers, did not God choose the poor who love him to have spiritual riches through faith and to be the ones who shall receive the kingdom that was promised?
6. But in honoring the rich you have humiliated the poor man. Do not these same exceedingly rich people humiliate you by bringing suits against you before the courts?
7. Do they not also make fun of the very name Christian which you wear?
8. When you say, "But we honor them because we love them,"

you do well to love them even as the Old Testament law states, *but*

9. if in honoring them, you dishonor the poor you show respect because of riches, and by not loving the poor you violate the same law you claim to keep!
- B.\*5. Listen to me, dear brothers: God has chosen poor people to be rich in faith, and the kingdom of heaven is theirs, for that is the gift God has promised to those who love Him.
6. And yet, of the two strangers, you have despised the poor man. Don't you realize that it is usually the rich men who pick on you and drag you into court?
  7. And all too often they are the ones who laugh at Jesus Christ, whose noble name you bear.
  8. Yes indeed, it is good when you truly obey our Lord's command, "You must love and help your neighbors just as much as you love and take care of yourself."
  9. But you are breaking this law of our Lord's when you favor the rich and fawn over them; it is sin.

### *Summary*

This class distinction causes you to unjustly honor those who persecute the poor Christians and to neglect those who are poor. This is a plain sin, for God says, Love your neighbor as yourself.

### *Comments*

Although James again uses his characteristic address *my beloved brethren*, he here adds *hearken*. If there is any possibility they did not get the point, he wants them to pay particular attention to the reasons. Undue concern over material things spoiled many Christians then, even as many thousands today lose their first love (Christ) because they love too much the things of this world. But the point goes beyond this. It is inconsistent with brotherly love, lacking in just judgment, and is open disobedience to God.

Their choosing to pamper the rich is in direct opposition to the nature of God's choice, who chose "the poor as to the world." Christ did not die for the worthy man, but for the unworthy. All men are unworthy (Rom. 1 & 2). But not all men know it. The poor of

this world have a great physical need. Physical needs we feel, spiritual needs we do not feel. The soul does not have a stomach to growl for food in hunger nor muscles to grow restless for lack of exercise, thus many men are dying of spiritual hunger and their souls are wasting away from lack of use; and they know it not. But a man with a serious physical need. . . . ah, that is different! In desperation he turns to God in prayer for food, or for healing, or for rest or whatever his physical need may be. Having broken down the "normal" resistance man has to submitting himself in request, he is now more willing to search his heart and seek spiritual blessing from God as well. Yes, the sick, the lame, and the blind physically are more able to see their need for spiritual healing and have their spiritual eyes opened that they might see Jesus and find salvation. Brother, the greatest blessing you have may be the fact that you have very little of this world's goods. If God sees fit to keep you in poverty, then He knows best. "Thank God for poverty!"

The riches in faith do not refer to material riches that are temporary and of no permanent value. These are the riches laid up in heaven, the riches of character and Christ-likeness, the fruits of the spirit, the samples of heaven we have on this earth. These are the riches that put a song on the lips of the poor, and an expression of rejoicing in the heart of the saint being persecuted. These are the treasures that "neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steel." (Matt. 6:20).

It is true that the church is the kingdom of God on earth, but the kingdom of God is more than the church. The redeemed church is still the tempted church. The born again still live in the flesh, looking forward to being clothed again with a new body. The promise of salvation we now have—but there is more to come! There is a sum total of blessings that shall only be ours when we are with Jesus in eternity. This is a fulness of the kingdom such as this earth does not now know. We become heirs of the kingdom when we are washed in the blood of Christ, and we remain heirs until we shall be with Him in heaven. (Matt. 19:28ff; 25:34; Mark 10:17; Luke 10:25; 18:18; I Cor. 6:9,10; 15:50; Gal. 5:21).

In verse 6 we note the rich often oppress the poor. The verb (oppress) means to dominate or exercise power over in a bad sense. The idea is to exploit people, such as to not pay the wages earned, or take to property and possessions from the helpless

through use of the courts and of the power that wealth gives. (See Micah 2:2; Amos 8:4; Zech. 7:10; and Jer. 7:6). Because of the use of "themselves", we gather that these very people to whom the churches were giving honor were the ones dragging the saints into court. (i.e., the rich Saducees of Acts 4:1; 13:50).

As if the treatment of the saints at the hands of these rich were not enough to show the inconsistencies of giving undue honor to them, James points out that the honorable name by which they were called, i.e. Christian (Acts 11:26; Acts 26:28; I Pet. 4:16), was blasphemed (reviled) by them. These rich would speak evil of the name Christian, or of the name of Christ which the saints used in the name *Christian*. There is a slight difference in the use of the word *blaspheme* and *revile*. If their insult were directed toward God, or toward that which was holy and sacred it would be translated *blaspheme* (cf. Acts 18:37; Rom. 2:24). If the insult were against man it would be *revile*. (cf. Titus 3:2; Rom. 3:8).

Verse 8 seems to be answering an anticipated argument, perhaps like this: "You say we are honoring the rich. We admit it. Are not these people as real as the poor people? When God commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves, did he not include the rich? Are not these our neighbors too? Certainly, some of them are unjust and take the poor to court. Certainly, some of them blaspheme the name of Christ, and these things we neither like nor approve. But we do love these as men, our neighbors, so what is wrong in giving them honor out of love?"

James answers that if in doing so it is truly to fulfill the royal law, they do well. The royal law is summed up as loving one's neighbor, and is fully stated in Lev. 19:18. This is, probably, called the royal law because of the particular emphasis put upon it by Jesus (Matt. 22:39; 19:19, etc.). Thus, to be polite to the rich, and to give them normal courtesy and treat them like gentlemen, is evidently not considered to be in error, but rather an application of the royal law. Yet, their treatment went far beyond the normal courtesy given any stranger. It was a difference clearly measured by the amount of their wealth. It was such honor as to show distinct preference even to the point of insulting the poor. James points out inconsistencies of their (unstated) claim to be fulfilling the royal law.

If ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin. This is an obvious transgression. If they are obeying the royal law in their respect



for the rich, why then do they not obey the royal law in respect for the poor? The same context with the royal law says, "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty." (see also Deut. 1:17; 16:19). The same law behind which they may hide concerning their treatment of the rich exposes their sin concerning their treatment of the poor. Next, James defines the principle transgressed in their actions.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

### *Text 2:10-13*

- 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all.
11. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou dost not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law.
12. So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty.
13. For judgment is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment.

### *Queries*

120. By what logic can we reason that to break one part of any law is to break it all?
121. How much is included by the expression "whole law?"
122. Who is the "he" that said "Do not commit adultery?" (v. 11).
123. The two main themes of the epistle so far, speech and conduct, are both covered in one place in this segment of Scripture . . . by what six words?
124. How can mercy glory against judgment?
125. What is the law of liberty of v. 12?
126. What in the model prayer given by Jesus is the same as 13a?
127. What can v. 13 have to do with the over-rating of riches about which James has been talking?
128. There are two great principles, one covering the Old Testament, and one covering the New Testament. Can you find them in this segment of Scripture and put them in your own words?

*Paraphrases*

- A. 2:10. All the parts of the law form one whole law, and a man cannot break any part without breaking the whole law.
11. For one God gave the whole thing and if you break any one commandment, you have disobeyed the same God who gave the other parts.
  12. So you would be better off to speak and act as men who are under the New Testament law of grace rather than under the Old Testament law of the covenant.
  13. For if you insist on sticking to the letter of the law, you shall be judged by the letter of the law. The free gift of grace gives you much more than you have earned under the law of justice.
- B.\*2:10. And the person who keeps every law of God, but makes one little slip, is just as guilty as the person who has broken every law there is.
11. For the God Who said you must not marry a woman who already has a husband, also said you must not murder, so even though you have not broken the marriage laws by committing adultery, but have murdered someone, you have entirely broken God's laws and stand utterly guilty before Him.
  12. You will be judged on whether or not you are doing what Christ wants you to, so watch what you do and what you think;
  13. For there will be no mercy to those who have shown no mercy. But if you have been merciful, then God's mercy towards you will win out over His judgment against you.

*Summary*

If you are hiding behind the law of loving your neighbor in your treatment of the rich, and you do not love the poor the same way, then you have broken a part of the law; therefore you are a law-breaker and will be judged as such. You had better stay under the grace of Christ in your speech and deeds, for as a lawbreaker you need His grace!

*Comment*

An oft repeated teaching of both the Old and the New Testament is the fact that a sinner is not fit to stand in the presence of God. *Any* transgression makes a man a sinner. Men like to measure their righteousness percentage-wise. We act as if we would like to be able to say "I am only 22.9% a sinner, and 77.1% righteous." God says, however, that if we are .1% a sinner, we are a transgressor of the law and not fit for heaven. One jot, one tittle of transgression, is enough to completely condemn us, and we are no more qualified to stand in the presence of God than the 100% sinner. When I measure my own meritorious works, my righteousness is as filthy rags; for one filthy thread contaminates the entire suit. (And who, save God, could possibly count my filthy threads?) If we could only understand the principle and stop using our bird-brain logic to rationalize our position before God, then in our ignorance plead for God to "please be just with me and give me what I really deserve." What folly for us to appeal to the justice of God when we have earned nothing but death! By what self-deception do we try to hide behind the very law that condemns us? What brazen blindness must overcome us before we would dare to demand that God give to us what is our just due. This is a principle that *every Christian* must understand before he can begin to appreciate what Jesus has done for us. It is a general principle of the law of God that God will tolerate *no transgression*, and that *no transgressor* shall stand in his presence. Any one sin whatsoever makes man a transgressor against God, completely incapable of earning heaven, with absolutely no right to demand anything of God. Having told one lie I stand as guilty as the murderer, or the thief, or the drunkard, or the adulterer, or the man who has done all of these. This is the law-principle. The principle condemns me whether I take the law from the Old Testament or from the New Testament. This law-principle is the main lesson of the Old Testament and thus made the O. T. a "tutor" to lead the human race to Christ. By this principle, I know I stand condemned and in desperate need of a Savior.

The subject of guilt under the law in v. 10 comes about by the possible appeal the Christian is making for his treatment of the rich. "The law says love your neighbor, and this rich man is my neighbor. . . . I am merrily keeping the law!" Then if so, I am

merrily being condemned by that same law when I fail to treat my poor neighbor the same way! Although the principle is spelled out carefully many places in both covenants, James here repeats it with clarity . . . it is that important!

A second principle is introduced in verses 12 and 13. This is the principle of grace and mercy under Christ. Under this principle I wear a robe of righteousness that is not my own. Because I put my faith in Jesus so completely that I put myself in subjection under Him, God counts this faith as if I were righteous, for He counts Christ's absolute righteousness as if it were my own. This is all possible because of Jesus' death on the cross, although all the ramifications of it I do not understand. God said that it was so, and even though I do not understand it all, I put my complete confidence in His Word. This is the principle of grace, wherein I am given that which I have not earned: forgiveness and Christ's righteousness. Thus my appeal is not to the law of God, but rather to the grace of Christ. Herein I have liberty to serve Jesus and to walk and talk with God, for my sins have been taken away by grace. For this reason I prefer to be under this "law of liberty" rather than the law of justice. If justice prevails in my life, I die. By God's grace, Christ fulfilled the law of justice and I now live by the law of liberty.

Verse 13 states that "judgment is without mercy to him that showed no mercy." Jesus put it a different way, but said the same thing in the model prayer: "forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." (Matt. 6:12). I am not protected by the law of liberty unless I live under the law of liberty. For Christ to forgive me I must live the forgiving life, for this is the only way I can live in Christ. Rather than trying to justify the action of favoritism to the rich by appeal to the law, I should rather observe the Spirit of Christ and view *all* men, both the rich and the poor, through the eyes of compassion and love and liberty. This would govern both the way I talk and the way I live.

Verse 12 seems to summarize all that has gone before. Almost all to this point could be classified as instruction concerning speech and deeds of the Christian. "So speak ye, and so do" by this second principle . . . the law of liberty. Herein is the mercy of John 3:16; but I am only covered in this mercy when I choose to do (i.e., live) this mercy. The relationship of these deeds to the faith that saves involves the rest of chapter 2.

*TWELVE SERMON TITLES WITH THREE-POINT OUTLINES***TEMPTATION IN THE CHURCH 2:1-4**

- A. Respect of Persons—General teachings against prejudices.
- B. Causes of false respect—riches, society, politics, skin color, race, physical beauty, etc.
- C. Judges with evil thoughts—placing physical values above spiritual worth.

**IN WHOM WE GLORY 2:1**

- A. Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.
- B. The sin of putting our glory elsewhere.
- C. Fading vs. never-fading glory.

**PREJUDICE 2:2-4**

- A. Come from improper regards.
- B. Manifestations of prejudice.
- C. Overcoming prejudices.

**EVIL-THINKING JUDGES 2:4**

- A. The sin of arrogance in judging.
- B. Sinful motives in judging.
- C. Christ, the judge of us all.

**THE CHOICE OF GOD 2:5**

- A. God chooses all, including the poor, the sinner, etc.
- B. God chooses those who love Him.
- C. We choose to be chosen of God.

**HEIRS! 2:5**

- A. Heirs by promise.
- B. Heirs of the Kingdom.
- C. Heirs by choice (God's choice and our choice).

**THE SIN OF OVER-RATING RICHES 2:5-9**

- A. God chooses those who love Him. (Riches are not involved).
- B. Men misuse riches. (Oppress the poor, dishonor Christ).
- C. The Royal Law demands that we love all alike.

## DANGER OF RICHES 2:6-7

- A. Oppression of the poor.
- B. Using influence of money for unjust purposes.
- C. Blaspheming the name of Christ.

## SINNERS 2:10-11

- A. What is sin. (The Law).
- B. Transgressing the whole law. (The Transgression).
- C. Guilty! (The Sentence).

## FULFILLING THE ROYAL LAW 2:8-9

- A. What it demands in relationship to our fellow man.
- B. The manner in which the royal law is broken.
- C. The real fulfillment in Christ Jesus.

## THE TWO PRINCIPLES THAT RELATE US TO GOD 2:10-13

- A. Justice.
- B. Mercy.
- C. The superiority of mercy over justice.

## A LAW OF LIBERTY 2:13

- A. Freedom from the law, is not absolute freedom.
- B. Free to love and be loved is not absolute freedom.
- C. Christ doth set us free.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE DEVIL'S FAITH

James 2:14-26

#### *Introduction*

*Faith* has come to mean some kind of magic word by which men shall do the impossible, even to the acquisition of heaven. The word really means to believe, and in most places in the scripture it could be so translated without doing violence to the intended thought of the writer. Thus, one who has faith is one who believes.

A popular song during the 1950s concerned a ram that did the impossible because he believed in himself. The ram butted a huge 10,000 kilowatt dam over and over until finally he broke down the dam. The point of the song was to believe in yourself with unwavering faith and don't give up; and the impossible will be accomplished. There is some point in the message of the song, for perseverance will often lead one to accomplish the seemingly impossible. The miraculous power often attached to *faith* in religion goes far beyond the power of perseverance.

Faith "is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." Heb. 11:1 is probably the most quoted definition of faith and perhaps the most concise statement in the Scriptures. Faith, however, is used with slightly differing variations of meanings. Sometimes the word is used of a belief in the truthfulness and accuracy of the Scriptural narrative and teachings. Sometimes it refers to the acceptance of God's grace through Christ. Sometimes it refers to the truth and faithfulness of God. It is also used for the doctrine of the gospel, which is the object of faith.

In each case, however, faith is a conviction, an assurance or trust. It is an attitude through which we put our confidence in something else . . . the object of faith. Faith without this object in which we can trust has no meaning. Faith in itself is valueless, meaningless, fruitless, and completely vague, being void of concrete application. Yet, many people seem to have a faith with no object. They speak of the miraculous possibility of accomplishment if they have faith. This is not faith in something, or in someone, but just *have faith*.

Their faith is really in faith. They believe that believing will make it so. This is a form of wishful thinking that enables a person to live completely in a make-believe world. In other words since a person has faith in the power of belief, he can believe anything he wishes and all is well. Faith in itself does *absolutely nothing*!

Then again, all objects of faith do not accomplish things for the believer. Faith may be put in an idol made of stone, and the idol would still do absolutely nothing. Faith may be put in a god fabricated out of one's imagination, and since this god is non-existent and is not Jehovah God, nothing will be accomplished by that god. Faith may be put in a system of salvation or forgiveness not ordained by God and this system will promise nothing to the believer.

Furthermore, if faith is placed in one not worthy of such confidence, the thing accomplished by the object of that faith may be the opposite of that which is expected. One may place faith in a person, in a minister, in a loved one; and then discover that this person does not accomplish the good and noble things expected. Instead may come evil and ignoble actions that disappoint and awaken one to his misplaced faith.

In what is your faith? Have you placed your trust in Jesus? Do you implicitly trust Him who will never disappoint; and who, being the same yesterday, today and forever, will never change? Or do you place your faith in a person who is subject to change and sin? Do you place your faith in the elusive faith itself?

And again, how *much* faith do you have? Is your faith in Jesus strong enough that you trust Him, and believe His Word? Is your conviction in the Christ whom you cannot see strong enough that you will *act* on this conviction, and conform your life to His revelation in the Word of God? Such is the question in the opening Scriptures of James treatment of faith without works, or the *devil's faith*.

### Outline

The deeds that come out of a worthwhile faith are so essential that to have a faith without such deeds would be completely profitless. Such a faith that will not cause the believer to work will not work for the believer. It is the kind of faith the devil has, and being alone without works is fruitless and will not justify.



*THE RELATION OF FAITH AND WORKS 2:14-26*  
*(THE DEVIL'S FAITH)*

CAN FAITH-ONLY SAVE? 2:14

FAITH-ONLY IS DEAD, BEING ALONE (Example No. 1)  
 2:15-17

GODLY FAITH VS. THE DEVIL'S FAITH 2:2-81

FAITH-ONLY DOES NOT JUSTIFY (Example No. 2)  
 2:21-24

FAITH MUST HAVE WORKS (Example No. 3) 2:25-26

CAN FAITH-ONLY SAVE?

*Text 2:14*

2:14. What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? Can that faith save him?

*Queries*

129. What is the difference between profitable and non-profitable? i.e., What would make a thing have profit?
130. Is there any profit whatsoever in a faith that would not be strong enough to prompt a man to action? (Think carefully, and consider the claims of modern psychologists.)
131. Does v. 14 suggest that the person with such a faith does absolutely *nothing*? What kind of works is it then that is not accomplished by this person?
132. What profit does this verse say should be expected?
133. What answer does James expect to the question?

*Paraphrases*

- A. 2:14. Of what use is it, my brothers, for a man to have a faith that is not strong enough to prompt him to action? Would such a faith bring him salvation?
- B.\*2:14. Dear brothers, what's the use of saying that you have faith and are Christians if you aren't proving it by helping others? Will *that* kind of faith save anyone?

*Summary*

Faith without works does no good and will save no one.

*Comment*

The man who says he has faith, yet does not conform his action, may be sincere in his belief. We should not imply from the "say he hath" of v. 14 that the man is claiming something he does not have and he knows he does not have. There is no indication that the man does not believe, any more than v. 19 indicates the devil does not believe. In fact, it would seem that the man is sincere in his conviction, but for some reason is not prompted to action. The point is that the *faith* is not to be blamed for the man's lack of action, but the *man himself* is to be blamed. Evidently the will of the man has a flaw, or his love for Christ is faulty, or he wavers between two opinions, or he has too much affection for things of this world. Whatever his reason, it is the man himself that is condemned for his lack of action, (v. 24). His conviction that Jesus is the Christ can be absolute, yet, because of other loves or other flaws he does not surrender himself to Christ.

The profitless state of the man who has faith without works is the emphasis of the verse. Modern psychologists will argue some tentative and emotional profit from a conviction that does not prompt action. A conviction that "there is some one up there" is supposed to give us a measure of assurance we need in moments when we revert to our childhood dependence upon our parents. Or a conviction that "someone" knows the answers to the problems that we find beyond us leaves us assurance that the world is not left in complete chaos and in aimless meandering. These "profits" (?) are so nebulous as to be worthless, especially in comparison with the grand profit that should be expected through faith in Christ.

James question, "can that faith save him?" expects the obvious answer "no!" This is obvious not only because of the thought-logic of the sentence itself, but because of the illustration and explanation that follows. The obvious answer "no" is reinforced so that we can see the fruitlessness of clinging to a faith that is not accompanied by a life surrendered to Jesus.

What James means by "works" in v. 14 is often questioned. Did he mean the fruits of the spirit, the good deeds of the Christian,

the conduct of one who has long since surrendered to Jesus? (see Matt. 5:16; 23:3; Rom. 2:6; John 3:20). Did he mean any *obedience* to the plain commandments of Christ? Did he mean what the world usually terms "good deeds", i.e., "visiting the widows and orphans?" (1:21; 1:25-26). Does he mean by works the same as Paul's use of the term in Rom. 3:28; 4:2?

Quite obviously James is speaking of an entirely different concept of "works" than that of Paul in Romans 3 & 4. Paul was speaking of works of merit, of works that earn the right to heaven, of works that are complete and perfect and will not require a Savior. James is speaking of works as obedience to Christ, the surrendered life that goes far beyond a mere conviction that Jesus is the Christ. Although James makes it clear the works of which he speaks are necessary (2:24), it is clear that these works earn nothing. The faith that works and prays is essential, but the salvation and healing come from the Lord, not from that faith. (see 5:15). God has ordained to work *through* a faith that obeys. God works the salvation, which is a free gift, a grace. He gives this salvation to those who choose to surrender their life by faith. To have faith yet not to surrender the life in action, is to fail to meet the requirements for the free gift of salvation.

Paul, too, uses the word "works" in the way that James uses it. To keep the readers from misunderstanding the Roman letter, Paul began and ended the epistle with necessity for obedience to be coupled with faith. (see Rom. 1:5 and 16:26). The "obedience of faith" of which Paul speaks is evidently very similar to the "works of faith" of which James speaks. In Philippians 2:12 Paul says the Christian must *work* out his salvation. In Ephesians 2:9 the Christian is created unto *good works*. In Romans 6:13 the Christian is admonished to present his members as *instruments of righteousness*. The kind of life lived by the Christian was very important in Paul's teaching. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die," Rom. 8:13. Paul also has much to say about the "fruit of the Spirit" and bringing forth "fruit unto God." To say that Paul and James did not agree in their doctrine is to completely misunderstand one of them, or both.

The salvation which faith without works does not bring, can mean nothing but the salvation from hell and eternal separation from God. This salvation that Christ gives through His death is not obtained except through a faith that works, or the obedience of faith.

In 1:22 James warns to "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers

only." He, also, makes it clear that the purpose is to "save your souls", and that the person who hears and does not *do* has "de-luded" himself.

Much in the same way he makes a contrast in 2:14 that is developed in the rest of the chapter. A confession of Christ, coming from a real conviction, does nothing for the person who does not *do* the word. James is saying that the man who is saved and who has the promise of heaven must *live* a real Christian life, and not merely have faith without the life that goes with it.

### FAITH-ONLY IS DEAD, BEING ALONE (EXAMPLE NO. 1)

#### *Text 2:15-17*

- 2:15. If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of food,  
16. and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed  
and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the  
body; what doth it profit?  
17. Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead in itself.

#### *Queries*

134. Just what is dead in v. 17?
135. Is the brother or sister of v. 15 a Christian? Would this question have any bearing on the point of the illustration?
136. Do you think that helping the hungry or naked is the only kind of works intended to here be coupled with faith?
137. What is the obvious expected answer to the question in v. 16?
138. Is James arguing that people who say faith alone is enough for salvation will act this way?
139. Do you think the person was absolutely *naked* when he was sent away?
140. Explain how the action of the person who sent them away illustrates faith. (i.e. faith without works).
141. Is James contrasting faith and works here? What is he contrasting?
142. "What doth it profit?" What does the "it" refer to?
143. How would we properly express "Go in peace" today?

*Paraphrases*

A. 2:15 If a Christian comes to you in threadbare clothing and hungry.

16. and you say to him: "Goodbye" . . . I hope you find something to wear and something to eat!" And yet you do not give him anything to wear or eat, have you helped him?

17. In the same way your belief in Jesus, if it is not coupled with obedience, is a dead faith.

B.\*2:15 If you have a friend who is in need of food and clothing

16. And you say to him, "Well, goodbye, and God bless you stay warm and eat hearty", and then don't give him clothes or food, what good does that do?

17. So you see, it isn't enough just to have faith. You must also do good to prove that you have faith. Faith without good deeds is dead and useless.

*Comment*

"So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith". Gal. 6:10. In v. 16 James makes the same emphasis in his illustration regarding the necessity for good works. For a Christian not to do good to members of his own family (or faith), is unthinkable. Thus, the absurdity of faith without works (i.e., compassion without mercy, 2:13) is made all the clearer. He has chosen for the illustration the one we would love the most (the Christian) and placed him in a position of most dire necessity. The "naked" refers to scanty clothing, or clothing which is so threadbare that it could hardly be counted as clothing. It does not mean absolutely no clothing (see margin John 21:3 ASV).

The phrase "go in peace" is an expression of genuine concern for the needy, and is not intended to sound hollow or mocking. Rather the genuineness of the expression stands in sharp contrast with the lack of action to bring the wish about.

It may be proper here to point out the possible argument in favor of the church's caring for its own needy. This seems to be the assumption of the context. And if intended, seems in contrast with

the church's practice of releasing its members to the government relief rolls. This is not suggesting that the man should be a cold ward of the church budget, but the help comes of genuine compassion of one brother for another.

The possibility of faith without works is made clear; but how is this faith different from the faith that does have works? James seems to indicate that the only difference is in the possession of works, (and of course the results are different). A great many seem to prefer to emphasize a kind of faith, rather than the absence of presence of works. They would seem to infer that the presence of the works is of no importance, but rather the genuineness of the faith. They would claim that it is a genuine and a sham faith that is contrasted, rather than a faith with works and a faith without works. In the next illustration James clears up the question when he affirms the devils *really do* believe, even to the extent of trembling!

When v. 17 points to the deadness of the faith, it is not to say the faith is non-existent; but rather it is dead and profitless as far as results are concerned. Perhaps it could be best said this way: we have no right to accuse a man of lying who said he believed but did nothing about the belief. But rather, as does James, we should encourage that man to *do* something about that which he professes to believe. The trouble may not be with his belief, but rather with his will-power, with his commitment, and, possibly, his love of sin.

"But there is a difference in the kind of faith, for James himself says that one is a *"dead faith within itself"*, you may argue. To keep the thought in harmony with the rest of his teaching, we might put it this way: "Faith, if it have not works, is dead being by itself." What is James really comparing? He is not comparing faith, with works. Nor is he really comparing two different kinds of faith, but rather he seems to be comparing a faith only (faith that is not accompanied by works) with the same faith that is not alone (faith with works). It seems to be the works that makes one dead (fruitless) and one alive (with results).

Among the faculties of the "inner man" (Spiritual man) are man's intellect, his will, and his emotion. With the intellect man believes, (faith). With the will man determines that which he should do, (choice). With the emotion man is motivated to act, (deeds). Faith, if it is to bring profit must go "all the way. ." from

belief, to choice, to action. If your conviction goes no further than your intellect, you may have "faith", but you are not a Christian! And because this faith, being alone, does not bring the hoped-for results of salvation, James calls it a dead faith.

## GODLY FAITH VS. THE DEVIL'S FAITH

### *Text 2:18-20*

- 2:18 Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith apart from thy works, and I by my works will show thee my faith.
19. Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well: the demons also believe and shudder.
20. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren?

### *Queries*

144. What did the man of verse 18 really say? (Could you put it in your own words?)
145. Just who is the speaker in verse 18? Is it the man who has faith without works? (Look carefully at what he said!)
146. Who said, "show me thy faith apart from thy works, etc?"
147. To whom did he say it?
148. Is it possible to show faith apart from thy works, as v. 18 states?
149. Can faith *exist* apart from works?
150. Can works exist apart from faith?
151. How is this faith apart from works defined in verse 19?
152. What do the demons have to do with the argument?
153. 19a appears to obviously be faith without works, then why does James say, "Thou doest well?"
154. Why do the demons shudder?
155. Do we have any proof from the gospel narratives that the demons believe?
156. Why refer to the man of v. 20 as a "vain" man?
157. What is the meaning of "barren?"

- A. 2:18 Yes, some man might possibly say, "You have the faith, and I have the works". Let someone show to me his faith without works, if he can. As for me, I will show my faith by the works I do.
19. You have faith that Jehovah is the only God, and this is good; but just remember the demons also believe this and they tremble with fear of their fate!
  20. Do you really desire proof, O man with the futile reasoning, that faith without works does not work?
- B.\*18. But someone may say, "You think the way to God is by faith alone, plus nothing; well, I say that good deeds are important too, for without good deeds you cannot show me whether you have faith or not; but anyone can see that I believe by the way I act."
19. You think "believing" is enough, do you? Believing in one God? Well, remember that the devils believe this too, and believe it so strongly that they tremble in terror!
  20. Dear foolish man! When will you ever learn that "believing" is useless without *doing* what God wants you to? Faith that does not result in good deeds is not real faith.

*Comment*

The man speaking in this verse seems to be some observer outside . . . neither James, nor the ones to whom James is speaking. The speaking man is obviously not the one who has "faith only", for he says: "You have faith, and I have works". It appears here that this third party is introducing a new thought. "You have the faith with no works . . . I have the works with no faith". "You claim the belief in Jesus, but your life is no different. Your submission to the Lord goes no further than your lips. The life you live does not agree with what you say. You have compassion without expression. Now as for me, I have the works. I show my compassion by helping my fellow man. When I see a brother in need, I go to his service. No, I don't need your faith, for I do the good deeds without your faith. I am a doer, not a believer. You might call my gospel a "social gospel" for we are not so concerned with what a man thinks in his heart as what he does in his life.



Our missionaries show the helpless people around the world how to raise better crops. Our ministers visit the jails and offer psychological help to those who are in need of such help. We offer food to the hungry, and clothing to the 'naked'.

If this is the argument of the third party, James dismisses it with a very brief statement, implying that we all know this man is wrong. It is as if this third party is quoted in defense of the man who has faith without works. This faith-only party may be saying: "Well, it's better to have faith without works than to have works without faith. Works only will get you nowhere!"

"All right," says James, "show me your 'faith only'. "But as for me, I will show you my faith by my works!"

There seems to be a bit of sarcasm in James reply. "Let's see you demonstrate without doing, if you can!" It would be difficult indeed to do without doing, to demonstrate without demonstrating, to show without showing! The faith-only man may tell of his faith, but his fellowman would have to take his word for it. He could not show it.

Fallacious is the conviction that religion is only for the inside man—that God's grace could not possibly have conditions attached that required man to act; that man is saved without deeds; that the teaching of God is salvation by "faith only".

Proof for such a "faith-only" doctrine is usually taken from Paul's Roman epistle. Yet Paul is most emphatic in stating that a man must "work out" his salvation; that a man must "obey", that a man must "present his *body* as a living sacrifice; holy, acceptable unto God." Not only must a man do this, but it is a "reasonable" service—that which is no more than what is right and proper—that which everyone should understand is God's right to expect. (See Romans 1:5; 12:1 ff., 16:26).

"As for me, I will show you my faith by my works." What other way is there to show a faith? And how many times has the apostle John taught that by expressing our love for our fellow man we express our love for the Father? Did not Jesus Himself show us that "As ye have *done* it unto the least of these, my brethren, you have *done it unto me*?" And if James is unable to convince a man that God requires a man show his faith in God by deeds to his fellowman, then he should read carefully the epistles of John, the words of Jesus, the teaching of Paul; in fact the entire new Testament!

When James turns aside to an imaginary person, and argues, "Show me your faith without your works (if you can)", he is using the Greek Diatribe style of argument. He turns to the imaginary opponent and addresses him directly as if he were there in person. This is a very effective debating style, used often by the Old Testament prophets, as well as the Greek debaters. It is very unlikely that James had ever talked with a person who believed that God would justify by faith without any works required. The tendency of the Jews was to say that God required works, but they often lacked faith.

"Then," you might ask, "Why does James make such a strong point of the argument?" James was trying to convince people to do that which they already knew was right and reasonable. He is not just trying to change the *conviction* of his readers . . . but their *action*. They already have faith, and this James recognizes. What they lack is the works to go with the faith. Not only do they need to trust Jesus (as they already do) but they need to *obey* Him. "Trust, and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey". This they knew, but this they were not doing.

How tragic today to realize that there are many sincere people who have been *taught* that a man is saved by faith without works. They *believe* that for God to expect a man to do as well as to believe is neither reasonable nor consistent with the logic of salvation by grace. (This is not meant to say that a man is saved by earning his salvation. Paul refutes this very effectively in more than one of his epistles. Earning salvation by works is impossible for any sinner. Obedience however, can be required as a condition of salvation without that obedience earning one ounce of the salvation gift. James and Paul are in perfect harmony here. (See the chart later in this chapter).

Verse 19 shows that James does not despise faith. He honors the Jewish confession that God is one (the "Shema"). This conviction that Jehovah is one God, and the only God, is the essential starting point in all revelation. "In the beginning God . . ." is the fundamental faith upon which further faith and action is built. This James recognizes. A man who believes this "doest well", but has not done that which is required. He has the basis upon which a saving commitment to Christ can be made. But without this surrender of both life and deed to Jesus, he has only made a start that accomplishes nothing

by itself. He is on his way, but if he goes no further, he is no better off than the demons.

Some may feel that James' "thou doest well" is a touch of the ironical. They may feel that such a man is only doing well if the demons are doing well, and that James is saying: "Fine, you are on about the same basis as the demons if you go no further." There could be a touch of irony here, but James is not belittling belief. The intellectual conviction of the truth is important, and basic. James is saying: Good, as far as it goes—but you haven't gone anywhere yet!"

"The demons believe and shudder". If there is anything odd about this, it is not that the demons believe. It is that man sometimes refuses to believe that which even the demons believe! The demons have the conviction that God is real and that His eternity of heaven and hell is real. Their conviction is so strong that they shudder at their destiny. This shuddering they do is similar to the bristling of an animal's hair when he is cornered and frightened because his life is in danger. When the demons contemplate Jesus, they bristle at the prospect of hell that looms before them. Men would do well to have such a conviction of the existence of God's heaven and hell!

What the devil (and demons) believe that makes them tremble is clearly outlined in John's vision. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever". (Rev. 20:10) The false prophet should open his heart to the Word of God and know his destiny. The demons know!

The facts are so fundamental and basic in this God-created world that it takes many years of "brain washing" to convince young men and women that there is no God. Pupils often are exposed to these subtle suggestions (of there being no God) in their early school years, then during their teens in high school they often see scornful rejection of God on the face of many of their teachers. At the college level, the professor who believes in God is such a rarity that the pupil often is convinced that education and a belief in God are opposed to one another. In a world created by God, with the evidence of God in every leaf, every star, every thing that has been made (see Rom. 1:20-21), the student is brain-washed to blind himself to the evidence, is shamed into a denial of that which is obvious, is ridiculed openly, laughed at and scorned,

until he himself turns to join the professors in open scorn of those few students who yet dare to believe. Now walking with the scoffers, he takes his stand with them that he may one day sit in their "seat". (See Psalms 1:1) Yes, 2% of the world's population, the educated "elite", need to *come up to* the faith of the demons before they can go further. They need to become convinced of the reality of Jehovah and His eternity of heaven and hell. To believe this, they would do well; but still they would be no better than the demons if they should go no further than an intellectual acknowledgment of the facts.

It is not just "some" action that God requires as evidence of our faith. It is *obedience* He requires. To do without eating kidneys on Fridays (which one may not like to eat, anyway) is no evidence of a Godly faith. Fasting from kidneys is action and this action may be that by which *we* would choose to demonstrate our faith. This is just the point! It is *our* selfish choice of action that makes our faith void. It is our refusal to submit our will to God's that limits our faith to a dull intellectual conviction that prompts no action. Likewise the person who stubbornly refuses to obey God in any commandment is by this refusal making his faith dead. The *perfection* which God requires of us is supplied by Jesus Christ. But the *submission* He requires, we must do ourselves.

The demons who believe actually do something about their belief, but what they do does not come from a will surrendered to Christ. An example of demons acting on their faith is found in Luke 8:26-33. Here the demons who occupy a man cause the man to fall down before Jesus in a position of worship, and through the man's lips confess, so that all may hear, their conviction that this is Jesus, the son of God. (See also Mark 3). The demon's faith, even when coupled with confession of that faith, is pointless without the surrendered life. The person who by his deeds shows he wills to *obey* Jesus Christ, with faith in God and His promises, can expect the grace of salvation through the blood of Jesus.

"Wilt thou know?" Do you not see the point yet, says James? Do you desire proof? Do you yet wish to know? Faith without works is barren. Is the believer in "faith only" for justification yet willing to recognize and acknowledge the truth? There appears to be here a point of vexation against the man who still does not see that faith only does not offer salvation. Yet, James with a tenacious spirit is

ready to offer other arguments from the Scripture of the Old Testament to convince the most stubborn.

"Faith without works is barren" offers a subtle play upon words in the Greek. Barren (*aggos*) denotes idleness, or a lack of results because of lack of work. James is saying, "Faith without works doesn't work!" The absurdity of holding that a workless faith works explains further the note of exasperation in the question.

### FAITH-ONLY DOES NOT JUSTIFY (EXAMPLE NO. 2)

#### *Text 2:21-24*

- 2:21. Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar?
22. Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect;
23. and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God.
24. Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith.

#### *Queries*

158. What is meant when it is said that Abraham was justified?
159. Why does the title "father" applied to Abraham have particular application to the argument?
160. How can it be said that Abraham completed the work, when God stopped him before he completed the sacrifice?
161. What is the similarity between this illustration and the one used in Romans 4:1ff.?
162. Why did James choose this particular obedience of Abraham to prove his working faith?
163. Just what was reckoned unto Abraham for righteousness?
164. How many similarities can you find between James 2:14-26 and Heb. 11?
165. How would you put "by works faith made perfect" in your own words?
166. Does "and he was called the friend of God" add anything to the argument? What?

167. Harmonize 2:24a with Gal. 2:16.  
 168. Is James eliminating the importance of faith in v. 24?  
 169. If Abraham's faith was reckoned unto him for righteousness, how can James conclude that we see clearly that the man was justified by works?

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 2:21 Recall how the "father of the faithful", Abraham, was counted as if he were righteous when he *obeyed* in offering the life of his son upon the altar.
22. It is clearly evident that faith was built along with his works of obedience and not separate from them, and by these same works was his faith completed.
  23. The Scripture spoke accurately of that which happened when it said. "And Abraham believed God, and this obedient conviction was counted in God's sight as if he were righteous, being called the friend of God".
  24. And so it is, you see, that a man is counted as if he were righteous in God's sight by what he does as well as what he believes.
- B.\*2:21 Don't you remember that even father Abraham was declared good because of what he *did*, when he was willing to obey God, even if it meant offering his son Isaac to die on the altar?
22. You see, he was trusting God so much that he was willing to do whatever God told him to; his faith was made complete by what he did, by his actions, his good deeds.
  23. And so it happened just as the Scriptures say, that Abraham trusted God, and the Lord declared him good in God's sight, and he was even called "The Friend of God".
  24. So you see, a man is saved by what he does, as well as by what he believes.

### *Summary*

The example of Abraham agrees with the Old Testament teaching in showing that the obedience of a man is important in his justification.

tion, even as his belief is important. When we separate faith from obedience, we destroy salvation.

*Comment*

"I believe I should, and someday I shall". If this had been Abraham's response to God's instruction about sacrificing his son, the story would have read quite differently. And yet today so many will declare that the moment a man accepts the proposition of God in his heart, that moment the man is saved. Obedience is today looked upon by many as an after-work, a result of salvation, that which comes after faith rather than that which builds faith. Many would rewrite this section of James to say: "The moment a man really believes, before he ever begins to obey, that moment God justifies him". Such a statement completely redefines the faith of the New Testament—an *obedient* faith in Jesus. Jesus asked the question as to which man is the better of the two—the man who believes but in the end refuses to obey, or the man who begins by denying but in the end he does obey. The chief priests and Jesus both affirmed that the man who began by denying, but ended by doing, was far better than the one who started with belief. All scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments affirm this in many ways.

The Holy Spirit, perhaps in anticipation that the book of Romans would be used as a proof text for a faith-only salvation theory, so inspired the writer that the book both begins and ends with the proposition that the *obedience of faith among all the nations* is the purpose of the apostolic revelation within the text. In the first chapter (1:6) Paul begins the argument with "Through whom (Jesus Christ) ye received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations, for his name's sake." In the last chapter (16:26), Paul concludes the entire epistle with the statement that the revelation of Jesus "is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith".

The book of Galatians is often used as a proof text for the faith-only doctrine. Yet all through the text Paul again affirms the important thing is the end product of doing, walking, working, living the faith in Jesus (as contrasted with the *meritorious works of the law* . . . 2:16). Paul says that the "life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith". Thus, righteousness is not through the earning power

of the deeds of the law, but through the grace of Christ which is ours when we *live in faith* (2:20-21).

In the Galatian text Paul also affirms that "as many as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ:" (3:27) that faith working through love" is what avails rather than the earning deeds of the law. (5:6); that the Galatians were hindered because they did "not obey the truth" (5:7); and that they should "walk by the spirit. ." that they "that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof" (5:23); *and* "let each man prove his own work" (6:4) and "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap" (6:7); so he concludes "So then, as we have opportunities, let us *work* that which is good toward all men, *and* especially toward them that are of the household of the faith". (6:10).

Abraham was *justified*, i.e., he was pronounced righteous. The word does not imply that Abraham was always just in the sight of God, without sin; but rather that at one time he stood in need of being justified; that once he was unjust and then became just in God's sight. "Was justified" implies that he passed from the state of non-justification to the state of justification. The word is also quite clear (this being the main point of the book of Galatians), that once a man becomes unjustified, he cannot justify himself; once having sinned, the wage is death and must be paid. A man cannot justify himself by earning justification with good works. The justification must be by the grace of God with Jesus paying the penalty. So Abraham was justified by the grace of God through Jesus Christ! yet *when did this justification apply?* During Abraham's life, you may reply; but *when* during his life? Did not God require of Abraham both belief and obedience? Does not the Scripture clearly affirm that he was justified *when he obeyed?* So it is, that to affirm "I believe, I am justified because I believe and someday I shall obey", is to completely warp and twist the very teaching of God's revelation.

Note how the hypothetical case of verse 16 proves the same point as the historical case of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac in v. 22. James is not contrasting faith and works, but rather showing how works complete faith, and how faith without the works is so incomplete as to be ineffectual.

The "perfecting" of faith by works (v. 22) again emphasizes the beautiful relationship between them. The culmination of faith is obedient works. Faith without works is much like parents without



children, unsatisfied, fruitless, void of its function. Faith leads us on, but we travel the journey only by works. To have faith without works would be like being led, yet not going anywhere. The wise men saw the star in the east and believed in its purpose. This may be likened unto faith. The wise men were led by the star and actually travelled to see King Jesus. This travelling may be likened unto works. Faith without works would not have taken them to King Jesus. Both were necessary!

Note how both Romans 4:1 ff. and James 2:21 affirm that Abraham was justified, or saved. Both are using the same illustration, but answering a different problem. Paul, in Roman 4, is arguing against the Jew who depends upon his obedience of the law to earn him heaven. James is arguing against the careless Christian who is depending upon a faith in Jesus that is not working. Neither one is justified. The Jew (of Romans) is not justified because he is not under the blood of Christ, and no man can earn salvation. The "Christian" (?) is not justified because his faith is incomplete, and does not take him to Christ. The Christian who is justified will go where He sends and do what He commands. His faith is a going and doing faith. It is a working faith. This is the only faith that will take a person to Jesus.

Another New Testament location of Abraham, Isaac and Rahab illustrations of faith is found in Hebrews 11. Here Paul argues that the fruit of faith is works, and that only faith can produce these works. This is similar to the argument in James 2:14-26 where James shows that works complete faith. The obedience of Abraham in sacrificing his son appears to be a supreme example of the obedient faith, being a shadow of the obedience of Christ in sacrificing His life for us. (Rom. 5:19).

The point is clear that it is not Abraham's conviction that was "reckoned unto him for righteousness" (counted as if he were righteous), but rather his active faith—his obedience in faith, or his righteous acts that was a result of his faith. (see Psalm 106:30,31; Gen. 15:6; Deut. 24:13; 6:25; Prov. 27:14). Furthermore, the use of the expression "reckoned unto him" makes it clear that this obedient action did not merit his righteousness. Rather his action demonstrated a faith that God counted as if he were righteous. Even as all men have sinned, so did Abraham; and the scripture is bold to record his sin. Abraham, fearing for his life, instructed his wife to lie regarding her marital relationship to Abraham. For this

Abraham was expelled from the country, being forced to take gifts from the heathen Pharaoh as he went. (Gen. 12:11-20). On another occasion Abraham repeated the same sin before Abimelech, king of Gerar (Gen. 20), and the father's example led the son into the same sin (Gen. 26:7 ff.).

Yet, in spite of his sin, Abraham's willingness to obey God out of faith in His promises was counted as if Abraham were righteous: "Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Gen. 26:7ff; James 2:23.) This substitution of an obedient faith for absolute righteousness becomes possible through the wage of sin being paid by the blood of Christ, and was applied in Abraham's case through the promise given unto him of the Messiah to come.

The verb "reckoned" has the force of crediting something to one's account which does not actually belong to him (Psalms 31:2). The verb may also provide manner of expressing the same, "counted as if it were equivalent to, thus having the same force and weight as something mentioned". Thus, God counts the faithful obedient life as a whole as approved as if the individual acts themselves were all righteous. (See p. 22, *Ropes*, on James).

How grateful we should be to God that we, who are so unworthy, could be counted as if we were righteous. That, even as Abraham, our obedient faith may be reckoned unto us as if we were righteous. Not receiving that which we really merit: hell itself, we receive that which we do not, and now cannot, merit: heaven. Such a love for us is pure grace, for we can in no way earn nor merit it. That we through a disobedient life should reject such an undeserving gift is unthinkable. Yet men do just that, perhaps in ignorance, or through self-deception arising out of a desire to continue in sin. God help us to speak with all persuasion and conviction as we attempt to lead others to accept the free gift of God's salvation, and become "friends of God".

The grand conclusion in verse 24 seems amply proved. There seems to be no need for further examples. He does not now say, "But wilt thou know.." (v. 20), but now "Ye see.." The evidence has been overwhelming. Works complete faith, and faith without its completion in works is dead, bringing no salvation, no results, fulfilling no purpose. A man is justified "not only by faith," clearly meaning here the "faith without works" he has been discussing so repeatedly.

"Faith only" is a bone of contention among religious groups. Anticipating such a dangerous religious philosophy (that a man is saved by what he believes without the necessary obedient action) the Holy Spirit has here revealed the will of God so clearly that it may be said, "Ye see.." Yet a man's desire not to see, or not to believe, can still blind him, and being self-deceived, he cannot (or will not) see the truth. "Seeing, they see not". A desire not to obey the Lord creates a desire not to believe the Lord's teaching regarding obedience in faith. And the desire not to believe can blind a man as effectively as if he had no possibility of spiritual sight. Tragedy of tragedies that the point is made so clear that all men can see, yet men choose not to see!

### FAITH MUST HAVE WORKS (EXAMPLE NO. 3)

#### *Text 2:25-26*

- 2:25 And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by her works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way?
26. For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead.

#### *Queries*

170. Of what nationality or from what people was Rahab?
171. Why do you think James used her for an example when there were so many examples from Israel he could have used? (As in Hebrews 11.)
172. Rahab was so positively identified as a "law breaker" (adultery and fornication are strictly forbidden in the law of Moses), how could it be said that she was "justified by works?"
173. Do you think this justifies Rahab's lying to the soldiers who were searching for the spies hidden on her roof-top? (The account is in Joshua 2).
174. What does Heb. 11:31 say about the reason for Rahab's being spared?

175. How many times in this section (verses 14-26) has James repeated the thought that faith apart from works is dead?
176. What is the meaning of "dead?"

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 2:25 In the same way Rahab, whose very occupation broke the law, was saved because she acted upon her faith by hiding the spies and telling them how to escape.
26. For just as the body is dead when it has no spirit, in the same way faith is dead when it has no works.
- B.\*2:25 Rahab, the wicked woman, is another example of this. She was saved because of what she did when she hid those messengers and sent them safely away by a different road.
26. Just as the body is dead when there is no spirit in it, so faith is dead if it is not the kind that results in good deeds.

### *Summary*

Rahab, the harlot, was a sinner, yet when she acted upon her faith she was justified; so faith must be coupled with action for justification.

### *Comment*

Every person of every race upon the earth, of every sex; yes, and of every occupation and condition of life may find justification upon the principle of faith herein described. True, the occupation may of necessity be changed, and most certainly the condition of life may be changed by salvation—but the point is that *every* person may be justified if he so chooses.

Rahab was a Canaanite, a woman whose very occupation was a continual violation of one of the ten commandments, under the full weight of sin. Her sinful state would not be questioned by anyone with the remotest understanding of God's revelation. The fact that she is here chosen as a case in point has at least two reasons.

First, her sinful state. The fact that man does not and cannot earn his way into heaven seems most evident in this particular example.

It seems that some people would prefer to grade sins as they would grade a paper in school. The A- sins are very mild; while the B+, while still acceptable, are not quite so good. Perhaps here some would like to call them "white lies". Most certainly many people would like to grade their sins between C and A, mostly "not so good", but passing! The "F" sins would include the ones committed by the other fellow, or the ones not continued by the person. The "grading" of sins is completely foreign to God's revelation. *All sins are F! There are no passable sins. . .*

When a person realizes his own sins are condemning—really "F" grade, and he (with his sins) is completely unacceptable to God, then his salvation by works doctrine becomes completely inadequate. In despair he realizes that nothing he can do will earn salvation. He is absolutely incapable of undoing his sinful state. Rahab was an "F" grade sinner, as is every person. Of her state there is no doubt. *Yet she found justification.*

How many people in torment, filled with guilt complexes, knowing they do not deserve heaven, could find joy through justification in Christ Jesus! The fact that Rahab was justified, and her working faith was counted as if she were righteous, should give us hope too. We are justified by works, as James puts it, not by earning our salvation; but by the mercy of God, who counts a faith that works obedience in us as if we were righteous. Rahab's example is an argument for a faith completed by works, and against salvation by "deserving" works (i.e. the works of law).

Not only does James emphasize the works of Rahab in connection with her justification, but the details of her working conviction in God are clearly stated in the account of the Old Testament, (Joshua 2 and 6:23). Paul declares "By faith Rahab the harlot perished not with them that were disobedient, having received the spies with peace." Thus Paul (assuming he wrote the Hebrew epistle) agrees with James. Her faith worked with, helped her works; and her faith was perfected by what she did; and she was justified because of that perfected (completed) faith.

The entire discourse is concluded with a final argument, an illustration. In repetition once again, he affirms that "faith apart from works is dead", adding this to the conclusion in v. 24.

The illustration regarding body and spirit might not be put together in the expected manner. One might expect that the body and works should be partners, and that faith and spirit would be

the counterparts. However, James joins the body with spirit, and faith with works. Through such an unusual statement, James emphasizes his point with all the more force. Even as the spirit is the quickening force that gives life to the body, so works is the perfecting force that gives life to faith. As the body has no fruit without spirit, so faith has no fruit without works. The simple, beautiful, and powerful illustration concludes his discourse on the great principle. It has been affirmed seven times within twelve verses. (2:14, 17, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26.)

Repetition has always been a means of emphasis and memory. It is extremely difficult to read this passage and miss the point! The sinner who reads the passage is not content to ask, "What must I believe to be saved," but as on the day of Pentecost must ask, "What must we *do*?" (Acts 2:37). The Christian who reads is forced to the conclusion that a genuine life of obedience and surrender of action to the will of Christ is necessary for his justification by grace. This, of course, is applicable in all fields: in morality, in work, in recreation, in worship. Instead of affirming in typical faith-only fashion, "for me to believe is Christ," let us affirm with the apostle Paul, "for me to *live* is Christ!" (Phil. 1:21; Gal. 2:20).

## SERMON OUTLINE

### THE DEVIL'S FAITH James 2:14-26

Introduction: John 3:16, the heart of the N.T. What does it mean? (Instead of looking for the answer in the theology of man, let us search the Scripture for God's explanation!)

Proposition: The devil has faith, he believes that Jesus is the Christ. Yet the devil's faith is not coupled with obedience. Will such a faith save him?

NO! James 2:14.

God's illustration: 2:15-16 (faith without works will not feed nor save).

Propositional question: "WHY NOT?"

I. v. 17 The devil's faith is *alone*.

i.e. the devil deceives by separating the word of God . . .

thus using only *part* of it.

He did so with Adam and Eve.

He did so with the temptation of Jesus.

He does so in separating John 3:16 from James 2.

II. v. 18 Godly faith is not alone, but *with works*.

III. v. 19 Devil's faith makes him TREMBLE.

*Why?* He knows his destiny. (Rev. 20:10).

He believes in Jesus (Luke 8:26-33).

IV. v. 20 Devil's faith is *dead*.

V. v. 21-23 God's illustration about Abraham. (His obedience was necessary).

VI. v. 24 *Faith only* is the devil's faith, and is deceptive.

VII. v. 26 Works are to faith what the spirit is to the body.

Conclusion: As the spirit is necessary to give the body physical life, so works are necessary to give faith spiritual life.

### THREE-POINT SERMON STARTERS

#### PROFIT IN CHRIST 2:14

1. Begins with faith.
2. Completed in works.
3. Results in Salvation.

#### BELIEVING IN DEMONS 2:19

1. They do believe (Luke 8:26ff; Mk. 3:7ff).
2. They shudder because they only believe. Luke 8:28b; Rev. 20:10.
3. We do well to also believe and couple this with works.

#### HOW ABRAHAM WAS JUSTIFIED 2:23

1. He believed God enough to obey.
2. His obedient faith was counted as righteousness.
3. He was called the friend of God.

#### RAHAB HAD IT 2:25

1. Rahab had sin.
2. Rahab had believing works.
3. Rahab had justification.

## DEATH 2:26

1. Death is apartness.
2. Physical death is separation of body and spirit.
3. Spiritual death is separation of faith and works.

(God and man)

## SPECIAL STUDY

## "WORKS"

*WORKS THAT "EARN"!* This kind of works emphasizes justice. It is concerned with wages deserved—with payment that is due. Righteousness that is absolute righteousness is a state of God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect" (Deut. 32:4) "For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). If we are absolutely righteous—without sin—then we have earned the right to be with God forevermore. Heaven is ours by right fellowship with God; it is not a matter of grace but a rightful place for a righteous man in God's image. *But no man has earned such a right!* "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (Isa. 53:6). "For we are all become as one that is unclean, and all our righteousness are as a polluted garment: and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities like the wind, take us away." (Isa. 64:6). "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23). "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (I John 1:8).

Sinfulness is the state resulting from having committed a sin—*any* sin—one sin is enough. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou dost not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law." (Jas. 2:10, 11). "For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them." (Gal. 3:10). Having committed one sin we have earned the wages of a sinner; DEATH—"Be not deceived my beloved brethren." (Jas. 1:16). "For the wages of sin is



death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 6:23).

If I insist on being treated *justly*—that I "get what is coming to me"—then I should realize I am really asking for death and hell. This is the wage I, a sinner, have earned! Throughout the New Testament the point is made clear that we cannot earn heaven if we have committed a single sin. The books of Romans and Galatians are particular in pointing out the futility of demanding wages we have earned. These wages are often referred to as "the works of the law." "Because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for through the law comes the knowledge of sin." (Rom. 3:20). "Yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Gal. 2:16). "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works that no man should glory." (Eph. 2:8, 9).

*Works that "perform"*. When reference is made to works in this sense, the emphasis is upon active participation. In this sense, I am admonished to have a love and devotion so strong that I give of myself. I must surrender so completely as to include my body as well as my heart. This "works that perform," refers to action, as well as confession and profession. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom. 12:1, 2).

Works, in this sense, emphasizes complete Faith—a complete devotion—a complete surrender. This is the "perfection" (completeness) the Scripture continually demands of us. God does not want us to view our work as a flawless action done with a purpose of earning but rather a complete surrender that includes my way of life as well as my devotion. The blood of Christ makes me as though I had not sinned, and God does this because I have surrendered completely. This includes my body—its deeds—my very

life. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21). "Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith." (Jas. 2:24). "If ye know that he is righteous, ye knoweth that every one also that doeth righteousness is begotten of him." (I John 2:29).

## CHAPTER VI

### THE FOOLISH TEACHER

James 3:1-12

#### *Introduction*

In 1:16, 26 James said "Be swift to hear, slow to speak." In a sense, the balance of chapter one develops the thought of how to hear. Now, James takes up the subject of speaking.

James refers to the speakers as teachers and as the "truly wise." Both are obviously the same, the first portion (1-12) being an admonition against foolish speaking by the teacher, and the second portion (13-18) being an admonition to be a wise speaker (teacher, from the context) and to speak the things of wisdom. The rule of wisdom is in this chapter coupled with the warning against foolish speaking.

In the warnings of the first twelve verses, some might be prone to conclude that to avoid teaching would be to avoid the pitfalls herein mentioned. Let us remember what James has been emphasizing all along—that faith without works is profitless, and that our faith is not completed until it is coupled with works. The admonition is not to do nothing, for this again would be faith without works. James, however, is saying that *what* we do is of some importance also! Faith coupled with foolish works, and foolish words will bring the wrong kind of fruit.

Faith coupled with the wrong kind of works is again a means of missing out on justification. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:19-21). James has already warned against doing no works. Now, he warns against doing the wrong kind of works; and in particular, saying the wrong kind of words. Even as Paul says, "So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10), so James speaks, "Who is wise and understanding among you? let

him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom.” (Jas. 3:13).

### *Outline*

Think soberly as you assume this responsibility of teaching, for we are not only judged by whether or not we are working, but we are judged by what we work, also. There is real temptation in teaching, for the tongue is often wild and uncontrolled, doing very extensive damage.

### *THE FOOLISH TEACHER*

TEMPTATION IN TEACHING 3:1-2

A BIG THING IN A LITTLE PACKAGE 3:3-5a

WILD AND UNCONTROLLED 3:5b-8

WHERE IT ALL BEGINS 3:9-12

### TEMPTATION IN TEACHING

#### *Text 3:1-2*

1. Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment.
2. For in many things we all stumble. If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also.

#### *Queries*

177. How can we ever overcome the shortage of teachers if we heed James' warning not to be many teachers?
178. Is James speaking to teachers, or to all Christians here?
179. What does the King James version say instead of "teachers," and what does the word mean?
180. How does v. 1 compare with Matthew 12:37?
181. In what sense may the person of v. 1 be called a "master"?
182. Why the prohibition against the choice of being a teacher?
183. What is implied by the expression "knowing"?

184. Is hell hotter for a sinning teacher than for a sinning non-teacher?
185. Is James saying we all offend someone many times, or that we all sin? (use several different reasons).
186. Does the stumbling with words of v. 2 include the non-teacher?
187. What is your description of the "perfect man" of v. 2? (compare with 1:4).
188. What is the contrast between the beginning and ending of v. 2?
189. What is meant by the expression "heavier judgment"?
190. What portion of v. 2 compares with James 1:4?
191. In what way is bridling the body linked to bridling the tongue?

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 3:1. Don't carelessly assume the responsibility of teaching, dear brothers in Christ, for with the blessings comes also the responsibility for erroneous teaching.
  2. Most prominent among the many sins we all perform is the sin of carelessness in the usage of words. If we control our words, we demonstrate our ability to completely control the whole man—including the deeds of the flesh!
- B.\*3:1. Dear brothers, don't be too eager to tell others their faults, for we all make many mistakes; and when we teachers, who should know better, do wrong, our punishment will be greater than it would be for others;
  2. If anyone can control his tongue, it proves that he has perfect control over himself in every other way.

### *Summary*

Before teaching, think soberly. We teach with our tongue and it is more difficult than the body to control.

### *Comment*

"Do not many of you become teachers" would at first glance seem to restrict the great commission. Matthew 28 and other parallel passages request the apostles and the church through the

apostles to teach the Word of God that "they might observe (do) all things . . ." A more careful examination of the context of James 3 reveals that the teacher and the wise man are treated as if they were substantially identical. Far from prohibiting either teaching or wisdom, James is saying the two must be carefully coupled. For a foolish and careless man to assume the position of teacher, would be dangerous to his soul as for a small child to play with dynamite. Other people would also be involved in the careless teaching or the dynamite, and the responsibility is multiplied.

A man who uses his tongue constantly is in much more temptation to use it carelessly and thoughtlessly than a man whose occupation seldom demands the use of his tongue. It would seem that the novice should (and usually does) approach the task of teaching with fear and trembling; with long and careful preparation and great concern lest he mishandle the tremendous opportunity and responsibility before him. Yet the temptation to the one who teaches constantly might be to speak with haste; or to slight his preparation. Erroneous concepts might be taught before they are thought. One instructor of teachers was heard to say to a large assembly of teachers, "There isn't a person in this room that will not be teaching heresy in some form or another within the next two years."

Over eagerness to be teachers might tempt some to assume the responsibility carelessly. Sober preparation is as necessary in teaching as for a doctor approaching an operation. Although teaching is commissioned by Jesus, and without it Christianity could not grow, its execution is so influential upon others that some men might be tempted to view it as a great social and political opportunity rather than a sobering responsibility. James cautions against over eagerness to be teachers in view of the great responsibility involved and the dangerous weapon used. Although the tongue is used to win souls for Christ, and to teach the saints to observe all things in Christ, the tongue can also be misused. It is as potent when misused as when used correctly. A great portion of chapter three is used to impress the reader with the enormity of the power of the tongue.

Thank God for my tongue. But God help me that I use such a magnificent power against sin and unrighteousness and not against man and the work of God. God help me to see the true nature of the enemy; the principalities and powers of evil, and may my tongue ever bring forth praise unto God and help unto man. If by

teaching I may be enabled to influence people for Christ, then God grant that I take the responsibility soberly and with great care! For wisdom I pray that I might know how.

"Then I'll never be a teacher," you may affirm.

But let me remind any who think to avoid condemnation through avoiding responsibility: God instructed the older women to teach the younger. God instructed the elders to be "apt to teach." God instructed parents to teach their children, and condemned parents who did not do so. Although the "rabbi" (teacher) referred to here can be a teacher resident in a congregation, or a travelling missionary, James in no way indicates that the teacher is an officer within the church. Rather, he is one who takes on a work and a responsibility. To try to avoid entirely the responsibility of teaching might in some ways be comparable to the person who says, "I fear to become a Christian lest I should backslide and my later state as a sinner be worse than my present state as a sinner."

## A BIG THING IN A LITTLE PACKAGE

### *Text 3:3-5a*

3:3. Now if we put the horses bridles into their mouths that they may obey us, we turn about their whole body also.

4. Behold, the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by rough winds, are yet turned about by a very small rudder, whither the impulse of the steersman willeth.

5a. So the tongue also is a little member and boasteth great things.

### *Queries*

192. The application of the illustration in v. 3 is not stated. What is the application?

193. How can the horses bridle be compared to human speech?

194. Why the "also" of v. 4?

195. Was the illustration of a very large ship applicable to the average person at the time this was written?

196. How do the "rough winds" lend force to the illustration?

197. What verb of v. 4 is identical to v. 3?

198. What is the meaning of "impulse"?

199. How can the ship's rudder be compared to human speech?

200. What is the import of the word "so"?

201. What "great things" are here accomplished by the tongue?

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 3:3. A small bridle in a horse's mouth has such great power over the horse that with it we can turn his whole body.
4. Note how the same thing also applies to the steering of large ocean vessels. It is a very small rudder that turns the huge ship around, even in the face of strong winds.
- 5a. In the same way the tongue is a small part of the body, but it can accomplish very great things all out of proportion to its size.
- B.\*3:3. We can make a large horse turn around and go wherever we want by means of a small bit in his mouth.
4. And a tiny rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot wants it to go, even though the wind is strong.
- 5a. So also the tongue is a small thing, but what terrible results it can cause.

### *Summary*

Our tongue comes in a little package but it can do big things.

### *Comment*

James evidently had the horse illustration in mind when he used the term "bridge" in v. 2. Little girls, in particular, seem to like horses. Perhaps there are psychological reasons. The horse's body is very muscular and magnificent in comparison to the little girl's frail body. Yet all this power and magnificence can be controlled by a little girl with reins in her hands.

Such a simple illustration makes the point quite clear. When we have controlled the direction of the horse's mouth, we have controlled the direction of his entire body. There is no need to make the application to the tongue and our own bodies, for any creature who could speak could also understand the meaning.

Our action, however, is often as though we did not understand. We so glibly and carelessly use the tongue, as if it were of no consequence whatsoever. It seems such an inconsequential matter to



boost our own size in our minds by cutting our fellow man "down to size" with our tongues. Little do we seem to realize that when our tongue takes a base and destructive direction, that our soul is taking the same direction. We act as if we had no knowledge—thinking that our tongue can be filthy and full of corruption yet ourselves remain pure and angelic. Do we really get the point of James' illustration? When you find the direction in which a man's tongue is pointing, you have found the direction in which the man himself points!

"Behold," that is, take note of this second illustration that the point will be well-driven home. "Behold" the same thought is avidly and clearly demonstrated by a fresh illustration. "Behold" the furniture of the same room in the house, but through a different window. On land and sea we have the same truth illustrated. No man can plead ignorance. No man can rightly claim the teaching is too complex nor the doctrine too philosophical. We stand naked and ashamed in the clear light of our own understanding. But this is not a sight we can glimpse and immediately flee. The Holy Spirit will not allow us. The simplicity of the truth dramatizes its importance. Even as the demons believe and shudder, we are forced to understand and tremble.

The great ship of the sea that holds so many people is not a strange thing to Biblical times. Jonah himself was with a large number of sailors on an ocean-going vessel in a storm. Likewise Paul was caught in a storm in the midst of the Mediterranean Sea. There were 276 persons on this boat. (Acts 27:37). So James speaks of a "great" ship turned about by a very small rudder, much like a paddle that protruded from a porthole from the rear of the vessel. Some of the larger boats had twin rudders that were coupled together, and two men could turn the large vessel about. How many tons, or hundreds of tons, could be turned with a twenty-five pound rudder? The illustration now begins to overwhelm us as we apply it to the power of the tongue!

Note also that the large ship is turned about at the impulse of the steersman. The rudder is not a wild thing of its own, thrashing about helter skelter and sending the boat every which way. There is a steersman who directs the boat according to his desire, his inclination, or impulse. "So the tongue" says James! The whole object of this discourse would be pointless if man were unable to do any-

thing about his own tongue. "These things ought not so to be" says James.

Can we imagine one day standing before Jehovah in the judgment and saying "Lord, please excuse me for I couldn't help it. I was thinking noble and clean thoughts while my tongue lashed forth within my mouth forming its filthy and trashy discourses. I listened in horror as I heard my tongue destroy the reputation and undermine the work of the very men I loved. I close my mouth with all my power, but the powerful tongue cries forth knocking teeth on its way to spill venom all about me."

No, when James is speaking of the tongue and all its power, he is also speaking of the desire of the steersman who directs it. I can't blame the rudder, for I'm on the other end!

The "little member" of the body . . . the tongue, weighs far less than a pound! Yet its power is so great that it not only turns about my whole body, but it can turn about the bodies of countless others. Families have been broken by a single tongue. Churches have been split and died because of the venom of a single tongue. Rehoboam's loose tongue split a kingdom and started a war!

Jotham told of the bramble (in his fable) who with its tongue boasted great things, promising to devour those who refused to take refuge under its shade. The bramble boasted great things, but it was an idle boast. The tongue can also boast of its power, but rest assured it is not an idle boast! Lest we would think it is really not so bad, the Holy Spirit leads us to consider the terrible destructive forces that can be unleashed. Even as the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, much more so can the tongue unleash a world of iniquity. Though it comes in a little package, it works a very big thing!

## WILD AND UNCONTROLLED

### *Text 3:5b-8*

- 5b. Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a fire!
6. And the tongue is a fire: the world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by hell.
7. For every kind of beasts and birds, of creeping things and things in the sea, is tamed and hath been tamed by mankind.

8. But the tongue can no man tame; it is a restless evil, it is full of deadly poison.

### *Queries*

202. Note how the small flame has its destructive power because of its ability to grow. It could not grow without someone to "feed" it.
203. Why is the tongue called a fire? (It obviously is not a fire.)
204. How inclusive is the expression "world of iniquity"?
205. Just how difficult would it be to undo the human harm done by destructive criticism of another?
206. Would there ever be a justification for destructive criticism (as opposed to constructive criticism?)
207. What is the apparent contrast between v. 6a and I Tim. 6:10?
208. Is the tongue by "nature" a world of iniquity among our members, or is it so only because we make it to be so? (i.e. is it poisonous by nature like a snake, or only when we choose to make it so?)
209. If we make the tongue poisonous—how then is it more dangerous than the other members of the body?
210. What thoughts does the expression "wheel of nature" bring to your mind?
211. The "hell" of v. 6 means what? (Look up Gehenna in a good Bible dictionary: see also Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mk. 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 1:25).
212. If you could think of a kind of animal that cannot be tamed (can you?), would it nullify this Scripture?
213. Compare this Scripture with Mk. 5:4 the only other use of this word "tamed."
214. What is the marginal reading in your Bible of "mankind"?
215. How can v. 7 be true when some sea creatures are just now being discovered?
216. Compare v. 7 with Gen. 1:26. Does Rom. 3:7 show an evolution in the control and ability of man over man's ability in Gen. 1:26?
217. Does James actually indicate that every wild animal can be tamed—or is tamed by man? (read carefully).
218. If the tongue cannot be tamed, why give us this admonition about taming it?

219. There apparently is a possibility of having control over one's own tongue. Does the part that "no man can tame it" eliminate the possibility that I can wilfully control my own tongue?
220. What of divine help on this matter of tongue control?
221. Between verses 2 and 12 there are eight illustrations used concerning the tongue. See if you can list them all!
222. In what way is a tongue like a wild beast? . . . unlike a wild beast?
223. Why refer to the "restless" nature of the evil?

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 5b. Think now how a single match can start a huge forest fire.
  6. And the tongue is made to be just as potent! This tiny member contains the capacity to ignite the world with sin; and begins by spoiling the whole body even to setting in motion the cycle of birth by which all kinds of related destructions are brought forth. Its flame is unleashed by Gehenna itself.
  7. Man has been able to train and control every type of creature, other than himself, including those that swim, crawl, fly and walk.
  8. But another man's tongue can no man tame. It is tireless in its activity and is an inexhaustible source of death-dealing wickedness.
- B. \*5b. A great forest can be set on fire by one tiny spark.
  6. And the tongue is a flame of fire. It is full of wickedness and poisons every part of the body. And the tongue is set on fire by hell itself, and can turn our whole lives into a blazing flame of destruction and disaster.
  7. Men have trained, or can train, every kind of animal or bird that lives and every kind of snake and fish,
  8. But no human being can tame the tongue. It is always ready to pour out its deadly poison.

### *Summary*

This little tongue can set all nature on fire of hell, and when unleashed is beyond all mankind's ability to tame.

*Comments*

What size fire kindles what size forest? The flame in a tiny match does not possess the heat and destructive force to consume a forest, but it can give birth to such a destructive force! Little forces are sometime triggers for tremendous destructive powers. A single push on a button can set off an atomic bomb!

However, not every button sets off atomic bombs. They must be so constructed and connected to have such a potential. Likewise the tongue is created with connections to our minds and to the ears of others. Thus it is so constructed that it can transfer concepts from one mind to another, and can set off processes of thought and imaginations in all those who hear. For its tasks of communication, praise, and witnessing it is so constructed. Thus the testimony of God is spread abroad. Men hear of salvation wrought by the blood of Christ and sing praises unto His name; thus hearts are warmed and filled with the Spirit of God.

The small match that has the potential of igniting a heating stove and warming the occupants also has the potential of igniting the house and consuming the occupants. So the tongue which has the capacity of warming men's hearts with the Spirit of God may work havoc and destruction with the spirit of the devil. With fire, given by God for a blessing, comes also the responsibility for its proper use. With the tongue, given by God for a blessing, comes also the same responsibility.

The "world of iniquity" among our members, though evidently not the sum total of all wickedness, does have that appearance. What sin among man does not engage the tongue? Does not the adulterer and the fornicator at first solicit and woo with the tongue? Does not the murderer usually lie and deceive with the tongue? Is not division and strife among the members of the body of Christ all but impossible without the power of the tongue?

Yes, the tongue's engagement in sin might also lead us to believe that it is the sum total of all sin. Yet the tongue has no guilt within itself. It is just a tool, an instrument for our use that has the capacity to reveal the spirit of the inner man. Among all the other instruments of our bodies available to the inner man, there is not one with the potency of the tongue. The wicked capacity of the tongue is so great we have the very expressive hyperbole that the tongue is

a "world of iniquity." Every evil feeling, every sinful thought, as well as every sinful act, escapes the world of abstract subjective privacy to become an objective reality visible to all others through the tongue. Even as the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, so the tongue gives power and concrete reality to every kind of sin in the universe.

But there is more to the tongue's contamination than this. The pollution is not a temporary phenomenon once done and forgotten, but rather sets off an entire process of living venom that appears to feed itself. The consuming fire that finds its own kindling as it proceeds is a very apt illustration. The 'wheel of nature' (cycle of birth) is set in motion so that all kinds of related destructions seem to spring forth from the flame once started. A bit of "choice" gossip, once started, picks up momentum and obtains added fuel with each retelling. The temptation to add poison to poison seems irresistible, and the entire cycle of giving birth to sin is ignited by a single spark.

Also the "wheel of nature" may refer to the entire cycle of human life, from birth to death. From the moment of speech until death, lies, tale-bearing, and destruction are strewn in the wake of the tongue. Responsibilities of life may come and go, but it seems that whether a child at home, a teenager in school, a parent with family responsibilities, or a grandmother with advice, the tongue goes on and on—ceaselessly, tirelessly, and sometimes wickedly to the very end.

The source of the tongue's fire, hell itself, is really the Greek form of the Hebrew *Gehennom* (or *gaienna*, Joshua 18:16, Septuagint). Originally Gehenna referred to the valley of Hinnom where the Molech, the fire god, was worshipped. Here the sons of Ahaz were burnt in the fire (II Chron. 28:3). The name, however, began to be associated with the place for torment of the wicked after final judgment. Thus Gehenna became the metaphorical name for the flame of hell itself. Here the fire never ceases, but continues through eternity. (Mark 9:47-48; Matt. 25:46; Rev. 14:11). So the tongue being set on fire of hell expresses in a very dramatic sense the unending process of continuing destruction set off by a single careless word. There have been several progressive expressions: From a *world of iniquity*, to the *cycle of birth*, and now the *fire of hell*.

## MR. TWO-FACED

*Text 3:9-12*

9. Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men, who are made after the likeness of God;
10. Out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing. My brethren these things ought not so to be.
11. Doth the fountain send forth from the same opening sweet water and bitter?
12. Can a fig tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a vine figs? neither can salt water yield sweet.

*Queries*

224. What is the difference between reference to God as "Lord" and as "Father"?
225. What is the inconsistency herein in praising God and cursing men with the same tongue?
226. What does "curse" mean as it is used here?
227. What is repeated in this verse, that has just previously been stated?
228. Why the repetition?
229. Why point out the impossibility of nature doing what v. 9 states that we do?
230. Compare 3:11, 12 with Matt. 7:15-23.
231. Do we actually accomplish what v. 9 states?
232. Why do you think the fig, olive, and vine were selected as illustrations?
233. Can you think of several others that illustrate the same point?

*Paraphrases*

- A. 9. The same tongue at one time praises the Lord and spits forth curses upon man made in the likeness of God. Thus we bless the Father and curse the Father's image.
10. The purity of praises and the filth of curses spring from the same mouth. My brethren, is this consistent and proper?
11. Does a fountain simultaneously from the same opening spill forth both sweet and bitter waters?

12. Does an apple tree bear both pecans and apples? Can a grapevine grow peaches? Neither can one fountain give two kinds of waters!
- B.\*9. Sometimes it praises our heavenly Father, and sometimes it breaks out into curses against men who are made like God.
10. And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Dear brothers, surely this is not right!
12. Can you pick olives from a fig tree, or figs from a grapevine? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty pool.

### *Summary*

With an inconsistency not found in all nature we bless the Father and curse the Father's image, man.

### *Comment*

Blessing God is contrasted with cursing man. When the father of John (the baptizer) had his tongue loosed on the eighth day of the new-born child, his first speaking was to "bless God," Luke 1:64. And when he began to prophesy, his first words were, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel . . ." (v. 68). It is not necessary to use the term "blessed" in order to bless the Lord. Any praise or extolling directed to Him or on His behalf is a means of blessing God. Even giving thanks unto God is a means of blessing him. (see Mark 14:19; 26:26; I Cor. 14:16). Thus it is that most people claiming to be a "Christian" cannot make this claim, nor pray, nor sing praises unto Him without blessing God.

Yet how many people will with one breath claim to be a Christian and with another breath, from the same mouth, invoke evil upon their fellowman? Sometimes the expressed evil desire upon the fellow man may reach the proportions of beseeching God to bring damnation upon his fellow man. God does not wilfully or wishfully bring damnation on any man. God's desire to save man from his own damnation was so intense it brought about an "unspeakable" sacrifice. Hell is not fit, and was not designed, for man. Although man may chose to be fit for hell, God has done and is doing everything to prevent man from bringing upon himself this horrible death.



To ask such a God to "damn" our fellow man is the height of affrontery and a disregard for His revealed love. Such a request reveals a tendency within our own hearts that is completely foreign to the ways of God. To request or charge our fellow man to "go to hell" is in complete opposition to the desire of God so constantly expressed . . . even by His tears and His shed blood. This is so obvious that a Christian needs but reflect a moment to agree.

But can we not also curse men without using curse words? In the same way in which we bless the Father by singing praises unto Him, can we not also curse our fellow man by expressing ill-will, by slander, by sending forth destructive verbal missiles? How many times men are tempted to climb the ladder of success by stepping upon the rungs of the spoiled reputations of their fellow men. Although we can never get ourselves out of the pit of guilt in this fashion, we sometimes attempt to feel elevated by trampling underfoot our fellow man. While we trample our neighbor into the mire of sin and shame, our own feet become stained with his blood, and the stench of our murderous action causes all mankind to withdraw from us in horror!

It is no wonder the Lord admonishes us to "bless and curse not." (Rom. 12:13). Although the Christian may himself be the object of cursing and receive reviling, defamation, and even the filth of the world, he is still admonished to bless and endure, as did the apostle Paul. "Even to this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and we toil, working with our own hands; being reviled, we bless; being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things, even until now." (I Cor. 4:11-13).

Oh, that entire congregations of God's people would read this third chapter and tremble. Countless are the broken hearts and broken lives that are left in the wake of a poisonous tongue. How many ministers have ceased to preach, driven to despair by the loose tongues of those who should be on the Lord's side? How many thousands have been driven from the assembly of God's people in shame and disgust over slander and tale-bearing? How many churches have been split asunder by the everlasting venom of poisonous tongues?

Who is the image of God? Some may argue that only the Christian bears this stamp. Yet, is not this very chapter addressed to Christians? Are not Christians involved in the very sins so strongly

admonished in this epistle? No doubt, the saint of God is to grow in God's image (II Cor. 7:2; Rom. 8:29; II Pet. 1:4ff), and no doubt he shall one day indeed be as He is (Phil. 3:21; I John 3:1-3; I Cor. 15:5ff). The Image of God however applies to all men. Man (mankind) was created in His image. Although man has corrupted and defaced this image; and although it is in no single instance all that it should be; the likeness of God is there . . . in both Christian and the non-Christian. (see I Cor. 11:7; Gen. 1:26; 5:1; 9:6; Malachi 2:10).

What then is this image? Is it man's body, having two legs; a creature that walks upright and has a thumb different from all other animals? Although a few may hold to this conviction, often using the argument to support strange and unusual doctrines not found in the Scriptures; the consensus is that man's likeness of God is in the nature and capacity of the inner man. God's image includes such attributes as reason, conscience, knowledge, the power of dominion, the capacity for moral and spiritual holiness, conviction through testimony (faith), etc. In potential and capacity, man is in the image of God. In freedom of will, freedom to choose heaven or hell, man is in God's image. In his guilt, his sin, his temporary body, his limitations to time and space he is certainly not in God's image; but one day, by the mercy of God even these things will change!

The problem of cursing seems to trouble many commentators. The allowable cursing within the Old Testament (Prov. 11:26; 24:24; Gen. 9:25; 49:7; Josh. 6:26; Judges 5:23; 9:20, 57.) seems to conflict directly with the prohibition of James. The problem seems to dissolve, however, when we recall that a curse does in reality exist, especially for the benefit of the devil and his angels. But we should also reflect that man is the author of neither salvation nor damnation. We can no more create a curse than we can create a scheme of redemption. To repeat the salvation offered by God, and to repeat the curse of sin revealed in the Scripture, is not only our privilege but our duty. But to set ourselves up as the judge of man and the author of either salvation or damnation is to assume in arrogance a responsibility we should by all means prefer to avoid. We have neither the capacity nor the right for such a task, and we only work havoc when we try.

Man with a free will of his own is able to do that which nature, moving only by instinct and intuition, cannot do. Thus man ac-

complished transgression and soul destruction beyond the ability of other creatures. Man can, and does, do things that "ought not so to be." He succeeds in being inconsistent because he is two-faced. The fountain is not two-watered, the tree is not two-fruited, but man can make himself two-faced. The tree was designed to bear fruit after its kind (Gen. 1:11). Mankind was also intended to bear fruit in God's image. It would be far better to have been a tree with no will of one's own than to be a man who deliberately makes the wrong choices in life.

The sweet waters from the hills around the dead sea sometimes go underground and furnish pressure for springs near to the dead sea. Before they spring forth, they mix with the waters of the dead sea, which are very salty. There are salt water springs near the dead sea and there are also sweet-water springs in Palestine. But no spring is both salty and sweet at the same time. Can a man love God and hate his brother? "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (I John 4:7-8)

#### *FOURTEEN THREE-PART SERMON STARTERS*

##### PROFESSIONAL WRECKERS 3:1-5

1. Every man has a tendency to wreak havoc v. 2.
2. A very small crow-bar can wreck a big house v. 3-4.
3. The tongue is the greatest wrecker of all, tearing down in a few minutes a lifetime of work. (v. 5).

##### THE BEGINNING OF SELF-CONTROL 3:1-5

1. We all need self-control. (v. 2a).
2. Small things control big issues, such as animals, ships, and lives. (v. 3-4).
3. The tongue's control is the beginning of self-control. (v. 5, 2b).

##### THE FULL-GROWN MAN 3:2 (Introductory note: Perfect = full-grown).

1. Children stumble, men walk. . . .  
We all wish to "grow up." (v. 2a).
2. Self-control is the real mark of a man. (v. 2b, cf Gal. 5:23).
3. The tongue is the key to real manhood. (v. 2b).

## THE TEACHER'S BURDEN 3:1-2

1. Heavier responsibility. (v. 1a).
  - A. Other lives at stake.
  - B. Greater knowledge increases one's responsibility.
2. Heavier judgment. (v. 1b).
  - A. God expects more from greater ability.
  - B. Ability to teach, admonish, guide ones own self.
3. Heavier reward. (v. 2b, the *perfect* man).
  - A. Teaching is in obedience of God's desires.
  - B. Heavenly treasures in the form of souls won.

## WHY LITTLE GIRLS LIKE HORSES 3:3

1. Power inherent in God's creature . . . "the whole body."  
(compared with the frail girl's body).
2. The huge creature can be controlled . . . "they may obey." (control is the difference between appreciation and fear).
3. A small member controls the big brute.  
(little girls with reins can control horses).

## LESSONS FROM BOATS 3:4

- A. Power essential for movement.  
(whether steam, motor, or sail, force is necessary).
- B. Movement essential for control.  
(Likewise we must be moving and doing before there is self-control).
- C. Directed control on a small rudder.  
(Haphazard control would get nowhere. Our lives must have direction and goal). (With proper power, movement and direction, a small effort will control a large life).

## THE WORLD OF INIQUITY 3:6 (Introduction: That's a lot of sin!)

- A. The many kinds of sin promoted by the tongue.  
(Lust of the flesh, of the eye, pride of life).
  - B. The world-spread misuse of the tongue.  
(Universality of lies, national lies, etc.).
  - C. The amount of sin promoted by a single tongue.  
(A life ruined, a family, a church, a community, a nation).
- Conclusion: Why did God give us such a powerful member?  
Its proper use . . . to praise Him and spread the Gospel.

## THE BURNING OF NATURE 3:6 (Introduction: Nature's life process).

- A. Sin *grows* through being fed by many tongues.
- B. Sin *kills* with its terrible destruction and wages.  
(People who enjoy death and corruption thrill with sin's processes).
- C. The tongue gives *rebirth* to sin, starting the cycle of growth and death again. (Illustration: the tale-bearer).

## PROMPT DESTRUCTION 3:6

- A. BURNING PROCESS of the tongue.  
... like a forest fire, feeds itself and grows.
- B. All-inclusive DESTRUCTION of the tongue.  
... a world of iniquity.
- C. Peculiar QUICKENING nature of the tongue.  
... Sets in motion a process of giving birth to new sin.  
... the "wheel of nature."

Conclusion: The tongue is made for quickening life instead of quickening death; for progress instead of the burning process, for construction rather than destruction.

## WHEN THE LION-TAMER RUNS 3:7-8

- A. Lion-Tamers usually do not run.  
... every kind of beast has been tamed.
- B. A wild untamed beast is to be feared.  
... His action is unpredictable.  
... He is a man-killer.  
... Death alone stops him.
- C. An uncontrolled tongue goes untamed. (application).

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNCONTROLLED TONGUE 3:8

- A. Untamed.
- B. Restless Evil.
- C. Full of Poison.

## MR. TWO-FACED 3:9-12

- A. The face worn before God.
- B. The face worn before some men.
- C. The inconsistent action against nature and reason.

3:1-12

JAMES

OUT OF THE SAME MOUTH 3:9-10

- A. Blessings for the Father.
- B. Cursings for the Father's image.
- C. Sweet words of love and vile filth of vessels of dishonor.  
(See II Tim. 2:20-21).

TONGUE-PAINTED PICTURES 3:1-8

- A. Professional Wreckers. (v. 1-5).
- B. Sin's "Hot Spot." (v. 6).
- C. Lion-Tamers in Flight. (v. 7-8).

## CHAPTER VII

### THE TRULY WISE TEACHER

James 3:13-18

#### *Introduction*

"Why insist this is directed towards the teacher?" the typical student asks. "The teacher has not been mentioned since verse one." The question seems proper and perhaps a real criticism until one makes a more careful examination of the usage of "wise and understanding" of verse 13.

The term "wise man" was often used, and its usage was primarily a reference to the teachers and to the teaching philosophers of the day. Paul was a debtor to the "wise" (philosophers) of his day. (Rom. 1:14). He parallels the "wise" to the scribe and the disputer of this world in I Cor. 1:20. The religious teachers of whom Jesus spoke were called the "wise and understanding." (Luke 10:21). This is not meant to imply that the teaching applies only to teachers, but rather *particularly* to teachers. After designating the teachers in verse one, James digresses somewhat in his discourse on the tongue in that all that he said applies to every person as well as to teachers; but the fact remains, teachers still have the greatest temptation with the tongue. The teacher, remember, is not only the one who appears before a class of pupils, but anyone who takes upon themselves the responsibility of giving advice to others, of admonishing, instructing, correcting; whether in private or in a formal classroom situation.

Thus the term "wise and understanding" includes many people. Where even a small group are gathered about in general conversation, there will be some, if not several, who speak as those having wisdom, experience, and understanding. Certainly it would include mothers and fathers, executives and "straw" bosses, the men on the street corner and the women over the back-yard fence.

There is no hint of belittling the necessity for the "wise and understanding" (as some might imply from the Luke 10:21 passage). There is a proper manner of working, and of showing wisdom and of a meek demeanor even as we carry out the Lord's instruction to admonish one another, and to bear one another up. There

must always be those who reprove and rebuke, as well as those who instruct; but always with the spirit of leaders who show others the Christlike spirit rather than drivers who impel others into a Christlike mould.

After a very dramatic demonstration of the foolish teacher's action (mainly through the misuse of the tongue), James prefers not to leave the subject in a negative tone. Now, he briefly describes a proper and Christlike spirit for the teacher. In this, James is insistent that Christianity must show itself by its works. "By their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. 7:20). The spirit inside a person must bring forth fruits visible to all and known by others about him.

There are two kinds of inconsistency that James notes more than once. One is found in the comparison of deeds and words. Our lives are to be consistent, with our "yeas" consistently "yea," and our "nays" consistently "nay." The instability demonstrated by wavering actions and double-speaking words has occupied a sizable portion of the epistle. Consistency of deeds and consistency of words are real gems in James' "Chain of Jewels."

The second kind of consistency comes from comparing the inner man with the outer man. A man with the Christian character of a meek wisdom must be consistent with a good life and contention on the outside. The mind of wisdom of the inner man will determine the kind of action of the outer man. It is with this second kind of consistency James deals in 3:13-18.

In order to show the proper relationship between Christian wisdom on the inside and Christian action on the outside, James defines wisdom in terms of outer relationship with others. The fruit is the only criteria by which inner wisdom can really be measured. As we pray for wisdom from above, may God grant that we have enough of that wisdom to read this section of James with all care and heart-surrendered application.

## WISDOM DEMONSTRATED 3:13

### *Text 3:13*

3:13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom.



*Queries*

234. Why the question in v. 13?  
 235. To what group of people does the question probably refer? (see Matt. 23:34).  
 236. To what group of people does the coupled expression "wise and understanding" refer in Deuteronomy 1:13?  
 237. Do you think the expression here must be limited to just teachers and judges?  
 238. Does the verb "show" describe more a manner of conduct or a manner of speech? Why?  
 239. Could the verb "show" include the speech? How so?  
 240. What are some synonyms of meekness?  
 241. Is wisdom ever brazen, or lacking in meekness?

*Paraphrases*

- A. 3:13. Let him who comprehends the spiritual truths and who is able to give good advice show the spirit of Christ by the life he lives with his courteous and considerate relation with others.  
 B.\*3:13. If you are wise, live a life of steady goodness, so that only good deeds will pour forth. And if you don't brag about them, then you will be truly wise!

*Summary*

The man who is truly respected for his inner qualities will have that respect because of his outer deeds.

*Comment*

The "expert" deserves and gets our respectful ear. We recognize his understanding; his ability to accomplish; his thorough knowledge. Without even using the term "teacher," nor thinking of a teaching situation, we stop speaking and listen when he speaks.. We are willing to let him show us how, for it is no shame . . . "He is an expert!"

It is of such an expert James is speaking. He has already called

this man a teacher (3:1), and now he calls him a "wise" man, a man of "understanding." The question that introduces the man creates an atmosphere of self-examination . . . and perhaps even doubt. It is natural to want to read more before being too bold in answering the question!

The sense of the verb "let him show" is that of demonstration. It implies conduct as a means of proof rather than the ready advice from his lips. The word "conversation" used in the King James might be very misleading. James is not saying, "Let him show by his talk," but rather, "let him show by his manner of life." "Conversatio" is a Latin expression for manner of life and meant just that in older English, but today it generally means talk rather than manner of life. Thus, "let him show by his meanderings and turnings in life."

The manner of life could certainly include one's talk as well as his walk. It would include all of one's dealings with circumstances and with people. A word spoken is just as much a deed as a gift given or as an object stolen, but the manner of life includes even more. It implies a complication of deeds done and words spoken over a long period of time. This shows direction and purpose, or a wandering in a wilderness. Manner of life is not a word, but a testimony. It is not a step, but a walk.

With one step as a measuring device, David could have been completely condemned (as Nathan so vividly demonstrated). But when viewing his manner of life, his meanderings and wanderings through life as a whole, God said of him. . "a man after my own heart." We are here admonished to live such a life as to have an overall excellence. This is the "good" life, a life of nobility.

Such a life is not quickly patched up. It is not proved by a single deed, nor demonstrated in a single week. It is the kind of life that will cause a husband to respect his wife, or a wife her husband, after living together for twenty-years! It is expected of all Christians, and would cause any Christian to be respected by the community that knows him. This is the living demonstration of true wisdom.

"Meekness" implies the right attitude. As far as showing respect for others, meekness is more important than being right. Thus the wise man will couple meekness with his good life. If the Christian's spirit is that of the meekness of Christ, then he will not be rough when he uses the sword of the Spirit of God on the tender hearts of his neighbors. He will not be egotistical in calling for

repentance, but rather have the attitude of being a fellow sinner who has found grace in Christ Jesus. "I'm a sinner bound to a body of death. I once cried out 'who can deliver me?', but now I know . . . I have found Jesus Christ. Don't you need Him too?" This is much more appealing to most people than the unkind, even egotistical, attitude: "God will send you sinners to hell if you don't repent." ("And I don't blame Him one bit!" is implied).

The meek attitude is just the opposite of the unyielding spirit with which we are often tempted.

It would seem that the Christian, who once was a sinner and who turned to Jesus for help because of the error of his ways, would always be ready to admit error. But not so! The meekness that is ready to be entreated is so often absent in the very persons doing the entreating! How amazing it is that Christianity has advanced as far as it has, with the arrogant and unyielding attitudes with which Christians often approach their neighbors, and even one another.

Not that we should yield right and Godliness. Far from it! But to yield "our rights" is another matter. Should we sue simply because we have the legal right? Should we repeatedly remind a repentant person of his sins simply because he really was guilty? Should we bear bad news as if we rejoiced in it? Or would it not be better if we had the grace to turn the other cheek as Jesus taught us to do? Can the ungracious expect grace, or the unrepentant expect forgiveness?

God, give us this wisdom. We need it.

## THE SOURCE OF FACTION

### *Text 3:14-16*

- 3:14 But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth.
15. This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.
16. For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed.

### *Queries*

242. A person who has bitter jealousy or faction in his heart is not wise. How does v.14 prove he is not wise?

243. Is there a good kind of jealousy in opposition to "bitter" jealousy? If so, what?
244. What quality must jealousy have, to make it a "bitter" jealousy?
245. What would tempt teachers in the church, or leaders in any organization, to develop a bitter jealousy?
246. To what does the word "heart" refer here?
247. Bitter jealousy and faction in the heart implies here that one is lying against the truth. Against *what* truth? (State the truth if you can).
248. How could the possession of jealousy and faction be said to be "glorying"?
249. To what wisdom does v.15 refer?
250. Compare v.15 with 1:17.
251. Earthly wisdom, or wisdom from the earth, would point to what quality of the wisdom?
252. How could this wisdom be said to be "sensual?"
253. What does the devil have to do with it?
254. v. 15 should refer to demons, rather than the devil. . can you distinguish between the two?
255. Can you find any link between jealousy and confusion? If so, what?
256. What is the ordinary sense of "vile deeds?"
257. What must the "vile deeds" here be according to the context?
258. Is there ever confusion in the wisdom from above? (Think carefully . . . what of disagreements over the meaning of Scriptures? What of the confused denominational world in Christianity?)

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 3:14 But if your life is filled with harshness and self-interest that make you divisive in your heart, then cease puffing yourself up and listen carefully to God's truth.
15. Your application of knowledge has been to satisfy the appetites of your flesh, and has much in common with the demons.
16. For where your kind of self-interest and trouble-making

spirit exist, there is also confusion and every good-for-nothing evil deed.

- B.\*3:14 And by all means don't brag about being wise and good if you are bitter and jealous and selfish; that is the worst sort of lie.
15. For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, inspired by the devil, and come from hell itself.
  16. For wherever there is jealousy or selfish ambition, there will be disorder and every other kind of evil.

### *Summary*

If your self-interest has filled you with jealousy and strife, then you have caused confusion and all kinds of evil deeds.

### *Comment*

There are a number of characteristics in this section that are the opposite of the wisdom from above. Perhaps these as given will help us determine between true wisdom and sham wisdom; and more clearly see the difference between wisdom from above and satanic wisdom.

"Jealousy," here linked with bitterness or harshness, has the evil sense of being filled with envy. This is self-love extended to the point of wishing deprivation of another. "I wish I had his Cadillac and he had a wart on his nose instead!"

This is the opposite to God's revealed wisdom. Instead of becoming a master through serving others, this wisdom seeks to become a master by making others the servants. Instead of spiritual growth through the Christian quality of being a "giver," this wisdom seeks to get gain by being a "getter." Instead of loving the brethren, loving your neighbor and loving your enemy in accord with the wisdom from above, this wisdom seeks expression through loving one's self above all else. This bitter jealousy is harsh zeal directed toward the hurt of other people.

God's kind of jealousy is not to be confused with this bitter jealousy. God is a jealous God for our benefit. This bitter jealousy comes from self-interest and self-love. Jealousy is used both ways in

the Scripture. In the good sense Paul says of his friends, "I rejoiced yet more because of your jealousy for me." (II Cor. 7:7). Of his own spirit he said, "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy . . ." (II Cor. 11:2). This jealousy of Paul for their welfare made him risk his life for their benefit. How different this is from the evil sense of being jealous . . . where we often bite and devour one another to gain benefit for ourselves. How often our cravings for sensual joys cause us to trample over the hearts and feelings of others. It is this kind of bitter jealousy that will make a man use all his talents to take another man's wife for his own, with no thought for the home that is destroyed, nor the man that is robbed. It is this kind of bitter jealousy that will keep church temperature boiling over and continually feed the flames of strife and division.

This bitter jealousy is also tied to faction. This green-eyed monster makes a man rob another spiritually (and sometimes materially). It hurts to be robbed . . . whether one is robbed of reputation, or of credit for a job well done, or of his good name, or of even the spirit of peace that should exist between Christians. The ones who are hurt usually retaliate, and strife results. Even if the animosity caused by jealousy does not break out into strife, the faction is there, simmering and boiling, ready at any moment to burst forth.

It is toward the root of the trouble that James speaks. The fruit of strife is only a symptom of the cause. The jealousy and faction within the heart is the true cause. The unethical desire to promote one's self is the ungodly wisdom. This is the "faction in your heart."

"Self-glory" is perhaps a single expression that would summarize the whole spirit spoken against. Love of self, seeking for self, promotion of one's self, feeding the self's appetites and revelling in one's own sensuous pleasures is bitter jealousy in action. No wonder the Holy Spirit says through James, "glory not," the negative side of self-glory is to glory not in the welfare of others, and to glory not in the Lord God and His revelation. The admonition to "glory not" obviously means to "glory not in yourself."

"To God be the glory, great things He hath done," the hymnal says. "I glory not save in the cross of Christ," Paul says. As Christians we rejoice and glory in the welfare of others and in the love of Jesus. How foreign to this is the self-glory "against the truth!" The truth probably refers to the Gospel truth, the revealed truth, or the truth just spoken through James.

James in verse 15 refers to the ultimate source of this wisdom.

There is no good in this wisdom, else it would be from above in its goodness. The evil in this wisdom pin-points its source; earthly, sensual, and devilish.

It is earthly in that it is opposed to heavenly wisdom. It is related to the "wisdom which is of this world" (I Cor. 1:20), and the "earthly things" of Phil. 3:19. Its benefits are earthly, in that they are apparent only in relation to things of this earth. They are dying benefits that are both short-lived and deceptive. They are deceptive for they are not true benefits, but apparent benefits that immediately vanish with possession. Earthly wisdom promotes a jealousy that is ever seeking, and never satisfied. It is a lust that cannot be satisfied, a hunger that cannot be fed.

It is sensual for it has as its goal the satisfaction of sensual appetites. The desire for sex, for comfort, for food, for clothing and shelter are all sensuous. Although bodily needs are essential for life on this earth, life on this earth is far more than satisfying these bodily needs. We should not live to eat, but rather eat to live. The life that has as its primary aim the satisfaction of physical pleasures is sensuous, and it is this same sensuous nature that is so closely related to bitter jealousy, and is in itself not a wisdom from above.

It is devilish (or rather, demoniacal) because it is in harmony with the evil spirits who are in service of Satan. To use knowledge for such selfish ends makes one related, at least in action, to the world of demons. The wisdom that brings forth such an action is itself demonical.

A careful study of this section seems to overwhelm one with an awareness that there is no neutral ground spiritually. Every man is in service of either God or the devil. There is not a "no man's land" where a man can be safe from both the sword of the Spirit and the fiery darts of the evil one. "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." (Matt. 12:30).

The spirit that fills a man with smugness and satisfaction while he rests his body and revels in sensuous satisfactions at home on the Lord's day when the saints are assembled together, is the same spirit that will fill a man with bitter jealousy over his wife's devotion to the Lord and continual involvement with the things of God. There is no "neutral" wisdom. Even such non-spiritual knowledge as mathematics and science can be used to puff up oneself against godliness. The lukewarm man finds himself distasteful to God, and he also finds full devotion to God distasteful to himself. He prefers that

all others be "lukewarm" even as he is, and he is propelled into active participation in the warfare when those very close and dear to him become fully dedicated in the Lord's service. His true position is then made known, for he places himself on the side *against those in the Lord's service!*

James clearly states the results of jealousy and faction within the heart. Confusion and vile action are the natural ends. Disturbance, disorder, and unruliness, become the order of the day when such a one comes face to face with a demand for full devotion and service to the Lord. Every action that is opposed to the good is evident, and such torturous self-destruction can be set loose even within the church itself.

## WISDOM FROM ABOVE

### *Text 3:17-18*

3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy.

18. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace.

### *Queries*

259. What is the source of this wisdom from above? (see 1:17)
260. Why do you think the text gives special emphasis to the fact that the purity of this wisdom comes before the peace?
261. How much peace could one have without the purity of wisdom from above?
262. Do you think it would be wise to compromise doctrine for the sake of peace? Why so or why not?
263. How many characteristics does this wisdom from above have? (count them).
264. Compare this number with the number of fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22 ff, and the number of Christian graces listed in II Peter 1:5-9.
265. Do you think the purity is first above just peace, or above all the other qualities listed?



266. What does the word "pure" mean?
267. Define each of the qualities counted in question 263.
268. Is the fruit of righteousness of v. 18 a part of the description of the wisdom, or is it another thought? How can you tell?
269. Verse 18 is an enlargement of one of the qualities of wisdom. Which one?
270. Why all this emphasis upon peace if purity is really the most important?
271. Does v. 18 indicate that the fruit of righteousness may be sown in something other than peace? How could the fruit of righteousness be sown in strife?
272. How can one "make peace?"
273. How does this section of Scripture apply especially to the elders of the church?

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 3:17 The good wisdom from God is first of all faultless, but a man who has it also seeks peace through kindness and is quick to be corrected. Like God, he shows mercy and the fruits of the Spirit are evident in his life; which is constant and unchanging, and true to the core.
  18. And he is able to witness righteousness in peace, because he is a man who seeks peace.
- B.\*3:17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure and full of quiet gentleness. Then it is peace-loving and courteous. It allows discussion and is willing to yield to others; it is full of mercy and good deeds. It is whole-hearted and straightforward and sincere.
  18. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of goodness.

### *Summary*

God's wisdom in the Christian must seek purity, and this is followed with the Christian graces and fruits with a sincere desire for peace.

"The wisdom that is from above" is contrasted with the wisdom that is "earthly, sensual and devilish." This true wisdom that is a gift from God (James 1:5), and that always "cometh down from the Father of lights," (James 1:17), is here described with seven characteristics.

It is interesting to note that there are seven fruits of the spirit (Gal. 5:22ff), that there are seven Christian graces (II Peter 1:5-9), and now seven qualities of the wisdom from above are noted. Some commentators see in this tendency to group items in numbers of seven within the Bible (days of the week, etc) as making or revealing a particularly holy or perfect quality to the number. This is nowhere stated or even implied. We might also note that there are nine special spiritual gifts, listed in I Cor. 13:4-7. Likewise, others feel there is something especially holy about the number three. There are three parts to man (so they say); body, mind, soul; or body, soul and spirit. There are the Father, Christ and the Holy Spirit. But why should three be chosen instead of two, we may ask. There is the outer man and there is the inner man. There is God and there is the devil. There is good and there is evil. There is worldliness and spirituality. There is a fleshly nature and a spiritual nature. There is light and there is darkness.

Since the Bible itself does not call any particular number as being more holy or complete than the other numbers, it might be the more reasonable conclusion to put no particular significance to the number seven, (or two or three, for that matter)! To do so would be to ignore the fact that the Bible is its own best commentary. It is poor hermeneutics to seek and find meanings not intended by the original author, or not clear within the text.

This wisdom from above is clearly the one that James recommends, even though it is understood from this text without being specifically stated. Original meanings of the author are not always specifically stated. They may be implied by statements, or (more commonly) implied by the context. The more forceful expression seems to be as James has here accomplished: to be content with the explanation and to leave the admonition to the reader. And now let us look at the seven qualities of wisdom from above:

(1) It is first "pure". Purity has the significance of being without contamination. To be unmixed with evil qualities is to be Godlike.

The clean, or holy, moral inward attitude, is that Christlike perfection toward which the Christian aims. Wisdom, too, can have this quality. Such wisdom would be unmixed with worldly, sensuous, or devilish wisdom. It would take into account all knowledge from God, and discount knowledge contrary to God's revelation. It would be motivated by God's kind of selfless love rather than man's kind of self-love. It would be wisdom that "seeks not its own, is not puffed up."

*What* about this wisdom is to be pure? *All* about it! Whether motivation that drives it, or knowledge that feeds it, or its very source. Its motivation is to be God's kind of love (agape). Its knowledge is just as obviously to be that revealed knowledge from God. Partial knowledge that comes from man's limited vision is often put in contrast with revealed knowledge. Descriptive sciences can never be as complete nor flawless as that knowledge that is revealed by the author of all that is. Although the Bible may contradict science (man's description of what he thinks he sees), God's revelation never contradicts existence! There is no disharmony between what God said and what God did in creation. Man's eyes, ears, and test tubes are entirely inadequate to discover all, and even correctly interpret what they do discover, of the things that God made. Wisdom that is pure, is wisdom built upon knowledge of revelation. Knowledge of science, no matter how thorough, would be entirely inadequate for such wisdom. This is the reason that Bible training is more important for a wise life than training in the liberal arts and sciences.

The peace is desirable, but never to be desired above purity. To be quick to receive correction is also admirable and a part of Godly wisdom; but never must this correction contaminate the purity of the saint or of his life. Wisdom from above is *first* pure! Purity is never to be sacrificed, even if all the other qualities must be sacrificed in its place!

(2) Wisdom from above is "peacable." The desire for harmony and unity leaves no room for pleasure in division. Contention is to be avoided where it is possible with the preservation of purity. The peace of Christ is to "arbitrate your hearts" (Col. 3:15) and to be the determining factor in all issues that do not tamper with the purity.

The Christian warfare is directed not against members of our own army. Soldiers fight and die side by side facing a common enemy.

When the saints of God turn upon one another to "bite and devour" one another they act completely out of harmony with God's wisdom and throw the camp of God into bitter confusion. The devil, though in the end to be destroyed, does win temporary battles and overthrow pockets of Christian soldiers that have not the wisdom to seek peace within their own camps.

After stating that wisdom is first in importance of the characteristics of Godly wisdom, peace is listed secondly. Whether or not the order after the word "purity" is with a meaningful purpose may not be determined, but certainly few will deny the damage caused because peace is not sought. Like bantam roosters in their arrogance of self-love, those who love not peace spend their time looking for a fight. With chips on their shoulders they peck from brother to brother until they find someone who will take up the challenge. Then after weeks of furious activity and a flurry of feathers, the victor cries, "I won, I won" in the midst of the shambled wreckage of a destroyed church. The sweet taste of victory of personal pride is swallowed up by a greater victory, for the devil won the battle!

(3) Godly wisdom is gentle, or reasonable and gracious. The gentle spirit does not demand that which would bring harm or hurt to his neighbor, even if one's own right must be forfeited. Gentleness speaks of the manner in which one saint touches the heart and life of another person, whereas peace speaks of the inner desire for harmony. The two are related.

Paul speaks of this desire not to bring hurt as the "gentleness of Christ", in II Cor. 10:1. It is this gentle spirit that brings one to turn the other cheek rather than retaliating. This is true whether our activity had to do with other saints, or with non-Christians. "Tough but O, so gentle" should be the make-up of the child of the King. Tough when it comes to purity of doctrine and life, but gentle when it comes to bringing hurt to others. Our desire should be to hang on to Christ like a bulldog, but to love our neighbor like a kitten; but at all cost, hang on to Christ.

(4) "Easy to be entreated" is also descriptive of him who has Godly wisdom. This is the characteristic of being compliant, or obedient. Easily to be persuaded (except away from matters of purity), the Christian is himself a teachable person. Far from being dogmatic and unyielding, he is ready to learn, even from his pupils.

The wise man says, "Let us sit together and learn from the Word of God." While the foolish (worldly wise) person says, "I'm right,

and you're wrong. There's no purpose in looking it up in the Word of God. I've read it many times!" It is good human relations to admit the possibility of error rather than being absolute in one's knowledge and decision in all matters. The man who knows so much he is unwilling to learn more is losing knowledge. If one is not willing to grow in knowledge and understanding, then he will lose that which he has, as well as lose those whom he would teach.

One of the dangers in dealing constantly with those who are being taught is to grow stale and lose the learning spirit. The positive arrogance of a teacher who is no longer easily entreated will spoil his personal work. The person who spends a lifetime in the classroom situation needs the earnest prayers of his fellow Christians lest in the midst of teaching he find a rut and lose his learning spirit. (And cannot this also happen in the arm chair of the living room?)

(5) The truly wise man is "full of mercy and good fruits". The mercy and compassion of Jesus are the subject of much Biblical teaching. We cannot expect forgiveness unless we, too, have the forgiving spirit. The merciful are blessed of God to the extent they shall find mercy.

Deeds of charity toward the poor and the sick are often associated with this "mercy." (See James 2:13; Luke 10:37). The poor in spirit and the sick in heart could also be included in this love of those in need; mercy is associated with both compassion and forgiveness. Christians have a wonderful opportunity to express mercy when others who have treated them in an evil or harsh fashion come for repentance and forgiveness. The unmerciful may demand an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but the merciful spirit of the saint is to forgive even "seventy times seven." And is not this the mercy we seek through Christ?

Being filled with good fruits immediately reminds one of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. These fruits of the Spirit are all spiritual qualities within the saint that can be observed by others around him. Immediately after stating these fruits of the Spirit Paul says "If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk." Gal. 5:25.

Thus the good fruits, even if they allude to the fruit of the Spirit, have to do with the effects of being filled with Godly wisdom. The produce, or effects, is the meaning of fruits. The deeds and acts that are manifest to others are good, rather than evil.

Note that mercy and good fruits are to *fill* the saint of God. "Full

of" has the idea that the person's life and character are overflowing constantly with the particular quality mentioned. The idea expressed is to have full measure (metaphorically, of course, for the author is referring to spiritual qualities rather than measurable material substance). A person may be filled with evil things, thus having a full measure of hypocrisy (Matt. 28:38), or of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malignity (Rom. 1:29); or adultery as in II Peter 2:14. For a person to have a full measure of these evil things might imply that there is no room left for a measure of the finer virtues, and the fruits of the Spirit are crowned from the life.

In the same way, to be full of mercy and good fruits might imply there is no room left for a measure of evil fruits. The best way to overcome evil is to so fill one's life with the finer things that there is no room for the evil. Thus one who fills his life with mercy finds that he has in the process overcome the temptations to bitter jealousy and strife. And one who has filled his life with good fruits has found that in the process the evil things have been crowded out. The idle hours are usually hours of temptation for the Christian.

(6) Without variance, or without doubtfulness in action, is the opposite from the doubleminded man described in 1:8 who is unstable in all his ways. The Godly wise person has no discord for he has no uncertainty or partiality that would lead him to vacillate. His action is consistent for he has but one mind; the mind of Christ. The teacher who is not consistently noble and righteous in both his attitude and his deeds, will soon lose the respect of his pupils. The teacher who has variance is one who is cut apart or divided in two. This division within himself gives him an unstable character and vacillating deeds.

(7) "Too many Christians are just play acting," is the way a Jamaica preacher states the quality of hypocrisy. It is a very good expression for the original word refers to the acting of the stage-player (from a word meaning "to answer", because stage-actors answer one another in dialogue). The word is sometimes translated "without dissimulation in II Cor. 6:6; I Peter 1:22; Rom. 12:9; (R.V.), or translated "unfeigned" (A.V.).

This discrepancy between what a person says and what he thinks; or between evil intentions and pretended good deeds, is soon discovered; or if not discovered, it is sensed. Hidden purposes and selfish motives are often covered up with a display of Christlike purposes and psuedo affections. This is a quality naturally hated

by all men, for it has the significance of sweet-tasting poison, or a skin-deep loveliness deliberately used to cover up a horrible ugliness.

In other people we admire the quality of honesty, and are ready to take at face value one whom we believe to be open and "above board". But in our own selves we must fight the temptation to gloss over petty and selfish motives with a pretended righteousness rather than changing the motives themselves. Love of self coupled with a desire to be thought righteous leads to such a temptation.

And the desire to be thought righteous may come from noble or innoble tendencies. One may desire the righteous reputation for political, personal, or monetary reasons; or he may have the desire for a Christian reputation out of a sense of obligation and recognition of right. In other words, his desire for a noble "front" may spring from a conscience that is partially satisfied in the reputation alone. The saint should understand, however, that this partial satisfaction of the conscience is also a partial deadening of the conscience; and that in this "play acting" method of overcoming his awareness of a continued attitude of selfishness he is quenching the Spirit within him, and becoming habitual and automatic in the devil's fine art of "deceit."

One may reason, "I will not be deceitful. I hate hypocrisy, so I will lay bare my divisive and bitterly jealous heart." Then, proud of his lack of hypocrisy, he bowls his way through the hearts and lives of others about him, laying waste the church of the living God and sowing seeds of division in his arrogance. This action may overcome the hypocrisy, but does not overcome the sin. There is no peace, for the seed has been sown in anger and bitterness, and anger and bitterness are reaped at harvest-time. "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace," James 3:18.

"If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Thank you, Lord, for showing the way in James 3:13-18!

### *THIRTEEN THREE-POINT SERMON STARTERS*

#### **WISDOM DEMONSTRATED 3:13**

Introduction: We are here for the purpose of demonstrating wisdom and understanding in the ways of God.

1. How we show it. (By His good life)
2. What we show. (His works)
3. The Spirit of showing it. (In meekness of wisdom)

**THE GOOD LIFE 3:13**

1. Is confirmed by Divine wisdom and spiritual understanding.
2. Consists of working the will of God.
3. Must be shown in meekness of wisdom.

**THE DIVISIVE HEART 3:14**

1. Has bitter jealousy and faction within.
2. Glories in itself.
3. Lies to self against the truth of God.

**HOW TO OVERCOME JEALOUSY 3:14-17**

1. Recognize the results of jealousy, confusion and every vile deed.
2. Lie not against the truth of God, but be a sincere learner.
3. Glory not in self, but in God and joys of others.

**GODLY WISDOM VS. EARTHLY WISDOM 3:13-15**

1. From above (1:17) vs. from the earth.
2. A meek testimony vs. a sensual purpose.
3. Captains: Father of Lights (1:17) vs. the devil.

**PARTNERS 3:13-15**

1. Factious wisdom with earthly, sensual, and devilish. v. 15.
2. Bitter jealousy with self-glory and lying. v. 14.
3. Godly wisdom with Godly works and meek spirit. v. 13.

**WISDOM NOT FROM ABOVE 3:15**

1. Is Earthly.
2. Is Sensual.
3. Is Devilish.

**FACTION**

1. Springs from bitter jealousy.
2. Lives in an atmosphere of confusion.
3. Results in every kind of vile deed.



## THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM 3:17

1. Fear of God. (Psa. 111:10) (From above)
2. Harkening to God. (Prov. 1:7) (From above)
3. Pure above all else (First pure)

## THE RAINBOW OF WISDOM 3:17

Introduction:

First pure: Colors and beauty gone without purity.

1. *Then* Peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated.
2. *Full of* mercy, good fruits.
3. *Without* variance, hypocrisy.

## PURITY OF DOCTRINE AND LIFE 3:17

1. Is commanded by God. (From above)
2. Is the product of Godly wisdom. (Wisdom)
3. Is the most important aspect of Godly wisdom. (First)

## WITHIN AND WITHOUT GODLY WISDOM 3:17

1. Separated by walls of purity.
2. Within: Full of mercy and good fruits.
3. Without: Variance and hypocrisy.

## THE RIGHT CLIMATE FOR GROWING RIGHTEOUSNESS

3:18

1. Seed sown by a peaceable person. (Who makes peace)
2. Seed sown in an atmosphere of peace.
3. Harvest of fruit: Righteousness.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CAUSE AND REMEDY OF STRIFE

James 4:1-12

#### *Introduction*

Can it be possible that the church of Jesus Christ could descend to the sins mentioned here so soon after Pentecost? In less than half a century could there be war in the kingdom of God on earth? Lust-ing, killing (at least in spirit), coveting, fighting, adulteresses who embrace worldliness, not subject to God, but the devil; with impure hands and filthy hearts; double - the midst of their sins - surely this cannot be the church of Jesus Christ!

Yet James, who calls himself a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, calls these sinners: my brethren (1:2; 2:1; 3:1) the brother of low degree (1:9; my beloved brethren (1:16; 19.); a brother and his brother (4:11); brethren (5:7) etc. James is quite clear within the epistle that some of the brethren may err from the truth and face eternal death in the end because of the multitude of sins (see 5:20). But even as he admits this possibility (and probability), he says; "My *brethren*, if any *among you* err from the truth..." (5:20a)

Paul has the same spirit in the First Corinthian letter. In listing sins so numerous, so vile, and so contemptuous that few Christians today would dare call those who do them brothers, Paul calls them "the church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.." (I Cor. 1:2). Then he says, even within the letter which clearly states some shall be judged, that some are guilty of the body and the blood of Jesus, that they provoke the Lord to jealousy, and that some are continuing in the same sins by which they shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

And what is the lesson for us? It is God that accepts and God that rejects. His Word is the standard, and He is the judge. The church is not in the business of punishing saints for their sins, but rather to persuade them to repentance that a soul might be saved from death. New converts in Christ do not come from the watery grave of baptism heavy with the fruit of the Spirit, but rather bud and sprout from the Spirit within; and there is a growth in Christ, and a

continual "putting on". There is often a stumbling and a falling, and a picking up. There is temptation, and there is repentance; and baptism removes neither the devil, nor the necessity for repentance for sins committed. Growth in the Christian graces is usually gradual.

But the miracle is there! Rebirth gives within the saint the Spirit of Christ, and a new nature for the man. There is a love for Jesus, and a repentant attitude that brings grief when the saint sins. There is the blood of Christ that has removed all sin's guilt so that with the grace of faultlessness the saint picks himself up from his sin and turns to Jesus; humiliated and shamed by his own weakness, but thankful and grateful for salvation in Christ. With a loving heart he seeks forgiveness as a son who talks to his father. Sinners yet, but sinners saved by grace. Sinners yet, but sinners growing and glowing in the love of Christ. Sinners yet, but sinners who have a hope and a promise. Sinners in fact but saints in grace.

To the sinning members of the church of Jesus Christ in Corinth, Paul said, "but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God." (I Cor. 6:11). This is the appeal of James as he addresses: "my brethren, my beloved brethren." This is the appeal of John as he says, "my little children."

Though the time may come when the church must withdraw "from every brother that walketh (continues to walk) disorderly," the call to repentance must be patient and continued in love; with a hopeful and loving spirit, with an expectancy to rejoice over the soul saved from death and the multitude of sins covered. This is what we see again and again in the New Testament: the example of the apostles and prophets as they issue the loving call to repentance to the saints of God.

The picture of the sinning brethren to whom James addresses the epistle is not pretty. In fact, some commentators who earlier wished to discredit the epistle, claimed that the description in James 4:1-12 showed the book to be uninspired and a product of Jewish writers who were not even Christians, but adjusted and adapted in such a way as to "fit" the canon of Scriptures.

Let us be honest, brethren! There is sin in the church; and that, often! We as Christians *do* need to repent; and that, often! Christ not only *was* my Savior, but *is continually* my Savior. Without Him I have no life. It is not just grace that I needed, but grace upon grace that I now need!

Growth I must have, but perfection eludes me, for as I grow I see Him more clearly; and what was no sin to me yesterday has become sin to me today. This is true when my eyes focus upon Him more clearly and my heart becomes more attuned to His wonderful Word. The further down the road I get, the more I yearn for flawlessness, for a complete overcoming. The closer to Jesus the more beautiful His flawless character becomes and the more acute is my longing to be like Him. Death becomes no more that dreaded monster that robs life, but rather that gateway through which I find eternal life; through which I go to be with Him and through which I go to be like Him.

James in analysing the destructive strife within the saint describes heart of the trouble as selfish pleasure. Love of self and enrapture with the senses can be overcome, but only through a complete dedication to God. The only way to overcome is to lose oneself in God: complete subjection; coupled with resisting the devil. When we humble ourselves to God He exalts us as if we were righteous, and we continue to proceed from where we are to where we should be.

Then, finally, James returns to the original thought . . . we are not the judges of our brethren, but God is. As sinners we are not fitted to be judges; and as being subject to God, we did not originate the law of God. We, being neither able to save nor to destroy, along with our brother, must submit ourselves to Him who is able to save and destroy.

## SELFISH PLEASURE A SOURCE OF TROUBLE

### *Text 4:1-3*

- 4:1 Whence come wars, and whence come fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your pleasures that war in your members?
2. Ye lust, and have not: ye kill and covet, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war; ye have not, because ye ask not.
  3. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures.

### *Queries*

274. Are these three verses addressed to nations that go to war, or to individual people like you and me? How do you know?

275. What is the difference between wars and fightings?
276. How could it be said that individuals have "wars?"
277. How do you know that the first "wars" spoken of here are among Christians?
278. Are these "members" of a person's body, as his arms, legs, lips, etc. or do they refer to members of the spiritual body, the church? Why?
279. What kind of pleasures in verse one?
280. The second "war" reference in verse one refers to what?
281. "Lust" of verse 2 refers to what in verse one?
282. Do you think this "kill" refers to actual murder? Must it?
283. The word "covet" is not the ordinary Greek word for covet. This word has a second meaning . . . to be jealous. How could the word "jealous" fit in where covet is? (Remember the comments of 3:14).
284. Does v. 2 indicate that people who covet, fight and war would have what they want if they would ask for what they want while they covet, fight and war?
285. Of whom do we ask in v. 2? (Be careful..think of who really has what we want).
286. How can v. 2 and 3 be true when obviously many people have a great abundance of what this world wants and they didn't ask for it?
287. What is the wrong manner of asking (praying) that is referred to in v. 3?
288. Are there other ways of asking amiss? If so what are some of them?
289. How can we reconcile the fact that James says "ye ask not" in v. 2, and "ye ask" in v. 3? Is he not speaking to the same people in both verses? Then how can the same people both ask and ask not?
290. What do you think "amiss" means? Would you be willing to change your mind if you found out it really meant something else?
291. Does "spend it" refer only to money? How could it refer to anything, even a wife, or a husband?
292. The word "pleasures" in v. 3 is important in understanding what is amiss. How does this furnish an answer to number 284?

*Paraphrases*

- A. 4:1 What causes constant contention and continual battle between different factions of the church of God? Are these not caused by your spirits being in submission to the sensual pleasures within your own bodies?
2. Your abnormal earthly jealousies drive you to destroy your brother. You want what he has, and being unable to get it, you make yourself his enemy; when the real reason you are unable to obtain is because you haven't asked God for it.
  3. And even if you have asked God for it, you still do not get it because you want it for the wrong purpose. Instead of wanting to be a better servant of God you are seeking only a more complete fleshly satisfaction.
- B.\*4:1 What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Isn't it because there is a whole army of evil desires within you?
2. You want what you don't have so you kill to get it. You long for what others have, and can't afford it, so you start a fight to take it away from them. And yet the reason you don't have what you want is because you don't ask God for it.
  3. And when you do ask you don't get it because your whole aim is wrong - you want only what will give you pleasure.

*Summary*

The continual fighting within the church comes from your unsatisfied fleshly desires. These drive you to fighting your brother instead of serving your Lord.

*Comment*

Some people may assume that the "wars" referred to in verse one are literal, in that Christians actually take sides and arm themselves with lethal weapons and have "gang" fights in which they kill one another. This type of fleshly murder and literal warfare with lethal weapons would not only have brought the civil authorities immediately into the conflict (murder was against the civil law then, even as now), but does not fit the context of the bickering and feuding church described in the book. When 4:1 is read within the

context of the entire epistle, it is much more likely that the weapons of this warfare are the tongues of the saints and that which is killed is the spirit, peace, and souls of the saints.

Some may feel that referring to these tongue battles as "war", and to these soul murders as "kill" is overly harsh; but in view of the true value of the human soul and the complete destruction of the grace of fellowship, war and kill might even seem too mild! In the eyes of God Himself, is not soul murder just as horrible as physical murder? Is not the destruction of the church a destruction of the most valuable kingdom this world has ever seen? Is not the entire Christian walk described as a continual war, and the individual saints, the soldiers of the cross, armed with spiritual armor? If this is true of the church's warfare with the forces of evil; it is certainly not too harsh for the Spirit to refer to this self-destruction between factions of the church as war within the church.

James' real concern is to find the source of the trouble. The trouble within the church is quite obvious to the church that has this kind of trouble. James is not addressing a group of the Zealots among the Jews who wish to arm themselves against Rome. He is still speaking to "my brethren" who are having real trouble through the misuse of this little member called the tongue. "Among you" locates the war.

Although James has already spent half a chapter on the terrible destructive power of the tongue, it is obvious that the blame for the action cannot be placed upon the tongue itself. The tongue is only the weapon. What causes a Christian to use his tongue as a weapon against his brother? What is the real source of this warfare that ought not to be?

The Christians who are engaged in this ignoble battle will desire to place the blame on their brother who is now their enemy. James' answer to the question will not be popular with those engaged in this tongue-slaughter who have no desire to repent. Whom a person will blame for his shortcomings is often very revealing of the character of that individual.

Honesty in facing one's sin is also assumed in this portion. Not only should a person admit the right source for his wrong-doing, but he should be honest in facing the enormity of the trouble. This is hard for a man to do. It makes one guilty and in need of God's grace. It robs one of pride in his own ability to be right. It drives one to remorse and repentance.

James does not pull any punches when he answers the question. Even though the question, as he stated it, is thought to be too harsh by some; his answer in the original language is harsher yet! Perhaps this is the real trouble with facing the issue. We do not like to admit the hedonic lusts he so vividly described so we would rather attribute the entire problem to a people away from the church, or at least far removed from ourselves to-day. And what is the answer?

"Come they not hence, even of your *pleasures* that war in your members?" The word "pleasures" here has a metonymical usage representing lusts. The word is used in an evil sense (here) and is very much like the lusts of James 1:14 that brings forth sin and death. These pleasures are really "evil desires for gratification of the flesh." This is the word from which we get our "hedonite", one who lives for pleasure.

This sinful and pleasureable desire is not a thing of the moment, nor a short-lived passing fancy. Rather this speaks of selfishness for the sake of the flesh; of wantonness in tramping over the rights of others while pleasing the self; of lasciviousness in revelling in the sensual appetites. It is a long-time revelled lust indulged at the expense of the brother's soul. Peace within the church and even the very existence of the local congregation must give way to the satisfaction of these inordinate desires.

Yet the devil is so clever with his deception that the warring church members do not readily see the true cause. Pointing accusing fingers and accusing tongues at one another they conveniently shrug off the blame and blind themselves to their own miserable state. Glibly they state: "God hates division," while they proceed with wanton murder within the church.

And where do these pleasures war? In your members, states James . . . but in what members? Some would say within the members of the church; i.e. that one member has a sensual desire but fulfillment is barred by another member; and thus differences in sensual desires cause the church members to war with one another.

A far more likely interpretation is that these pleasures reside within the members of an individual, within one particular physical body. The tongue is described as a "world of iniquity among our members . . . which defileth the whole body." (James 3:6). Even so these lustful pleasures reside within the inner man.

If this second interpretation be correct, then the "*pleasures that war in your members*" explain the situation. Within the individual



it is the *pleasures* that drive and attack again and again, forcing the tongue into its fiery defilement, and forcing the other members of the body into creating strife within the church. Thus, the second "war" in 4:1 refers to the war within the individual caused by pleasures within him.

There is no peace with the brethren because there is no peace within the individuals. There is conflict within the church because of the warring pleasure within the inner man. The peace that passeth all understanding is drowned out by evil desires to please the fleshly appetites, and so that which is within the individual causes that which is without the individual.

In verse two James uses another word for strong desires to appease the fleshly appetites; lust. (See comments on 1:14). Lust here is used in the evil sense, as in 1:14. There seems to be a progressive sense in these first two verses. From living for pleasure to inordinate desire (lust), and on to kill seems to have a parallel in coveting, then fighting, and finally war! (Westcott-Hort, margin).

The word for covet can be translated either "bitter jealousy" (3:14; Acts 17:5); or simply to desire earnestly (I Col. 12:31). In the context of contention and evil here would favour "jealousy" as the proper usage.

The object of the desire as well as the purpose seem to indicate its good or evil sense. The "better gifts" of I Cor. 12 are spiritual in that they are for purposes of edification and instruction, whereas the object of this James 4 coveting is evidently the satisfaction of the hedonic pleasures at war within the members of the body. Yet even the noble gift of God can be used for the wrong purpose and be turned into selfish edification (see I Cor. 14:4a). Both what a man longs for, and for what purpose he longs have to do with the quality of the longing. So James indicates in 4:3.

It is interesting to note that these who lust and fight with bitter jealousy do not obtain. It would seem that such frantic and bitter zeal would accomplish the purpose of sensuous satisfaction, but not so! It is the nature of the senses within our members that when overly indulged and gratified, the body becomes fat with indulgence, yet hungrier than ever. The more a man eats, the greater his appetite. This is also true of the sex appetite, or of most of the other instinctive desires when they are pursued by a hedonite.

Solomon was probably the most notable example of this truth in the Old Testament. He had the wealth and position to gratify all his

sensuous desires; and he held back on nothing his "heart" desired. After a lifetime of gratification, he declared it was all useless, futile, unfulfilled; "All was vanity and vexation of spirit."

A lust that can never be satisfied is born of indulgence. Let the young man and woman realize this when they are tempted to indulge in a necking party. Let the man realize this when he begins to make frequent visits to the beer parlor. Let Mr. and Mrs. "Overweight" realize this when they approach the dinner table! Real satisfaction is only possible within the limits of self-control.

The "asking" of v. 3 is in a "reflexive" sense (middle voice). This means the action is turned towards oneself. Thus one might say, "since you want for yourself you do not pray for the kind of things the heavenly Father will give, so you are not willing to ask Him for it; and you do not receive it. And even if you do ask Him for it you do not receive it, because you ask it for yourself."

Successful prayer life has a great portion in the Saint getting what his heart desires, or should desire. If he does not desire what is good for him (i.e. what God wants for him) then he will not pray for it. Not praying for it he does not receive it. Who can determine the extent of spiritual blessings ready for the saint if he would but seek them? And what sense it makes to seek these blessings from the source. "Every good gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." To desire to succeed in spiritual matters is not enough. To work for success, good as it is, is not enough. Desire and work should be coupled with prayer.

And this prayer should be for the right cause . . . the cause of Christ. When we realize that God has the blessings, and that God has the knowledge; we also realize that God knows what is best under all circumstances. With the justice, mercy, and love of God in mind, we ask that His will be done above all that we might think or desire. Our personal desires may be expressed, but with the understood condition (which may often be expressed) that if our desires are contrary to God's desires, He knows what is the better of the two, and His will we really want. If we really mean it, we want His will to be done even at personal inconvenience, or suffering, or a shortening of physical life itself! Not to pray with this understanding ("in the name of" or "for the sake of") is to pray amiss; and we often do not get what we want because we want the wrong thing, or we want for the wrong purpose.

James expression (that ye may spend it in your pleasures) goes

beyond the wrong purpose expressed above. The word for "spend" has the idea of excess, or waste. In Luke 15:14 the prodigal son "spent all." Thus we ask of God with the unspoken desire to exhaust it upon our own fleshly pleasures. The initial selfish purpose balloons, which is the nature of selfishness. A man may pray for money, but the selfish purpose involved in his seeking expands so that even should he receive it, he is then unwilling to share and would resent even an unselfish token in the use of the money.

## DEDICATION TO GOD ALONE IS THE ONLY ANSWER

### *Text 4:4-8a*

- 4:4. Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world, maketh himself an enemy of God.
5. Or think ye that the Scripture speaketh in vain? Doth the Spirit which he made to dwell in us long unto envying?
6. But he giveth more grace. Wherefore the Scripture saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.
7. Be subject therefore unto God: but resist the devil and he will flee from you.
8. Draw nigh unto God and he will draw nigh unto you.

### *Queries*

293. Do you think the term "adulteresses" refers to people who commit the physical sin of adultery, or is this used in a figurative sense?
294. Assuming that the term "adulteresses" refers to spiritual adultery, are there any other cases in the Scripture where the term is used to your knowledge to refer to spiritual adultery of those who are "married" to God?
295. Why do you think "adulteresses" is used in the feminine case here?
296. Why do you think the King James translators wanted to add the masculine "adulterers" to the phrase? (It is not in the original Greek).
297. Try in this verse to identify the adulteress, the person the

- adulteress in "married" to, and the person with whom the adultery is committed. (They are all referred to in v. 4!)
298. What does the term "enmity" suggest to you?
299. Do you think the adultery described in v. 4 is a very common thing?
300. "The World" refers to what? (Don't just say "world", but name what it probably refers to . . . rocks and trees; money; people; a certain kind of people, or what?)
301. Is friendliness with the unsaved forbidden in v. 4? What can "friendship of the world" mean?
302. When does the Spirit take up His dwelling within us? (9 v. 5)
303. For what, do you think, the Spirit in us longs?
304. Do you think envy, or jealousy, is too strong a word to refer to the Spirit?
305. Can envy be a good thing? If so, under what circumstances?
306. Who gives the grace, God the Father or the Holy Spirit? Does it really make any difference. Why so or why not?
307. He gives "more" grace . . . more than what?
308. How is the "proud" in verse 6 related to verse 4?
309. The term "the Scripture" in v. 6 is not in the original. The subject is not stated. Can you think of anything else that might possibly be the subject other than the Scripture?
310. "Humility" suggests that something is to be surrendered, given up. What?
311. Who are the humble of v. 6?
312. Grace is an unmerited favor. What is the favor bestowed in v. 6?
313. In v. 7, *therefore* refers back to what?
314. Note how *being subject* and *resisting* are opposite actions.
315. The action of the devil when he is resisted is clearly stated. But what is the action of God. (v. 7) when a person is subject to Him?
316. Love begets love, and obviously "drawing nigh" begets "drawing nigh" in v. 8. What might be implied if we resist God?
317. Why do you think we wish to classify v. 8a with v. 7 in this section?

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 4:4. You who break the marriage vows to God by embracing the world, don't you know better than this? Your affection

for the pleasures of this life have made you so hostile to God you have made yourself to become His enemy.

5. Or perhaps you simply think the Word of God does not mean what it says! The Spirit that lives inside us longs for our affection even to the point of jealous envy.
6. But the Spirit gives us a greater measure of undeserved blessing in order that we might yet accomplish His will. To this end it says, "God arranges Himself against the proud but gives unmerited favor to the humble."
7. Therefore set yourself under God's authority and align yourself against Satan, and he will run away from you.
8. Come close to God and He will come close to you.

B.\*4:4. You are like an unfaithful wife who loves her husband's enemies. Don't you realize that making friends with God's enemies—the evil pleasures of this world—makes God your enemy? I say it again, that if your aim is to enjoy the evil pleasure of the unsaved world, you cannot also be a friend of God.

5. Or what do you think the Scriptures mean when they say that the Holy Spirit, Whom God has placed within us, watches over us with tender jealousy?
6. But He gives us strength to stand against all such evil longings. As the Scriptures say, God gives strength to the humble but sets Himself against the proud and haughty.
7. So give yourselves humbly to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
8. And when you draw close to God, God will draw close to you.

### *Summary*

Your adultery with the world leaves God's Spirit yearning for you, so submit yourselves to God, your husband, and resist the devil.

### *Comment*

Universally, adultery is a particularly obnoxious sin. Because of the devil's deception and because of sensuous pleasures involved, the obnoxiousness is not always apparent to the participants at the

moment of involvement. But to those sinned against, the very thought is repellant. A man's most prized possession is his wife, and a wife's most precious possession is her husband. Adultery is the sin that contaminates the preciousness of that possession. A jealousy is provoked, but not as much as jealousy of what is, but a jealousy of what was. A singleness of devotion and a giving of one's self to only the mate is one of the prized rights of marriage. He or she who has lost this single devotion of the mate and has shared their mate's body with another has been deeply hurt over a terrible loss. And that which was lost cannot be returned in its former singleness and purity. The knowledge of the inability to return to the purity of the former state is part of the irreparable loss.

It is God who has given man this most precious of all human relations . . . marriage. From the very beginning of man, He ordained that a particularly godlike kind of person would be a one-woman man and a one-man woman, and "Till death do us part" is engrained into the entire framework of marriage from the beginning. So emphatically is the sin described in the New Testament that Paul has stated by the Spirit of God "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God." (I Cor. 6:9-10).

It is recognized that he or she who commits this sin may repent and return to a wholesome relationship with God even as they may repent of any sin. It is the continued practice of any sin that makes a proper relationship with God impossible. And this is just the point of spiritual adultery!

As terrible as physical adultery is, there is an adultery more terrible yet! This is spiritual adultery. Of course, he who continues in physical adultery is also committing spiritual adultery. And what is this "spiritual adultery?"

Every Christian is a member of the body of Christ. When we obeyed the Lord in full surrender through baptism, He added us to His body, the church. This church body is also called the "bride" of Christ, for whom Christ will one day come and receive unto Himself. After a discussion of the relationship of husband and wife, in which the Spirit speaks of a pure love, being holy and without blemish, He says, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great: *but I speak in regard of Christ and the*

*church.*" So we, the members that make up the bride of Christ, are presented to Him "a glorious church, not having spot or blemish." (See Ephesians 5:22-33).

To embrace the "world," with its sensuous pleasures and carnal appetites being put ahead of devotion to Christ, is spiritual adultery. To love anything or anyone ahead of God is spiritual adultery. The prophet Hosea's unblushing faithfulness and continued love for a harlot wife is so vividly described that it appears repulsive (and was obviously intended to so appear), and even shocks one's moral sense. And through the prophet's situation, the lesson from Jehovah went forth to Israel, who had for generations been committing spiritual adultery. The love of Jehovah for his bride is magnificent beyond understanding, and the indifferent adultery of Israel is worthy of all abhorrence. If the message through Hosea could not shock Israel to repent of her spiritual adultery, surely nothing could.

And so it is the Holy Spirit speaks through the same message. The ones who are married to God have embraced the world as their first love, and have thus committed adultery. In this friendship with the world they have made themselves an enemy of God and a friend of His enemy. The Holy Spirit that dwells within the Christian yearns and longs for that saint's devotion as the bride of Christ.

Loving the world more than loving Christ is a sin so common with Christians that it would seem few know the terrible adultery involved. Yet James says, "Ye adulteresses, don't you know better than this?" The very nature of sin is to so deceive the sinner that he soon is unable to tell right from wrong. The longer the sin is embraced, the denser is the veil drawn over the eyes of understanding.

For this reason there is a desperate earnestness in admonishing the saint to give up sin and wrong-doing. This is evident in the Spirit's endeavor to warn the Christian before he embraces sin too long to again see and recognize the truth. Twenty-one of the Twenty-seven New Testament books are addressed to Christians and filled with pleas to shun the embrace of the world and to cling steadfastly to Christ Jesus.

The saint, too, should feel the same desperate circumstances when a brother becomes engaged in spiritual adultery. To love the pleasures of this life James calls "friendship of the world." This perpetual adultery breaks the heart of God and soon passes the

point of toleration of the Christian involved. The Christian who refuses to repent soon finds his love for ungodly things of this life has changed himself into an enemy of God. He actually has a hostility toward God that keeps growing to the point of hatred. This is the meaning of "enmity with God." Thus one who once loved God can, through continued sin, become a God-hater and an enemy of God.

This continued spiritual adultery is not a sin that is done accidentally, but a life that is lived deliberately and continually. Willful choice is clearly implied by the usage of the word "would." "Who-soever *would* be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God." The point is, whosoever would wish to be; or would desire and intend to be . . .

It might even be implied from this section that the desire to be a friend of the world could be in the heart without doing the deeds of sin; and still the person could become an enemy of God because of the adultery in his heart. Thus, a person who names the name of Christ, yet spends his hours and his heart's devotion in longing and lusting for the sensuousness and rottenness of this life could develop a hearty hostility toward God that would lead him to be God's enemy. This inner hatred for God might not be evident to the saints of the church, until one day it breaks forth in an act of such hatred toward godliness and such embracing of worldliness that the entire brotherhood is "shocked" by the "sudden fall."

It might appear that "overnight" the person has changed from a devoted saint to a devoted sinner. "He's not in his right mind," "he must be insane," would be typical remarks. In shocked disbelief, the saints who observe such a one might tremble at the possibility of a sudden fall that appears to completely transform the character in an instant. The warnings of the Spirit, however, indicate that the fall is not sudden, but began with a desire in the heart that was fed and nurtured to the point of making oneself an enemy of God.

"Or think ye that the Scripture speaketh in vain?" There is a problem in this portion. What Scripture is speaking in vain? A single passage? A quote that follows? If this is so, then that which follows should be a Scriptural quote: "The Spirit which he made to dwell in us doth long unto envying." The difficulty is that the particular sentence is used nowhere else in the Bible! Such versions as the Revised Standard that use this sentence as a direct quote are unable to refer the reader to the passage quoted!



The more acceptable reading would be to understand that *all* the Scripture is speaking in vain. It is foreign to the tone and teaching of all revelation that a man could be a friend of God's enemy and a friend of God at the same time. This lesson is evident in every account of sinful man from the beginning. From Cain and Abel through all the Patriarchs; from the beginning to the end of the children of Israel; within the Lord's own apostles, the lesson is clear: a man cannot serve both God and the devil. He must hate the one or despise the other. If he is not for the Lord, he is against Him.

The last portion of verse five is more difficult yet. Whether or not it is a quote, it is still difficult to determine exactly what is said. Some of the difficulties in this portion bring up these considerations: Is it a question, or a statement? Who does the yearning? If it is God, or the Holy Spirit that longs, does He, or does He not, long unto envy?

The Revised Standard seems to indicate that God longs jealously over man's spirit which He made to dwell in man. The American Standard seems to indicate that the spirit of man which God made to dwell in man longs to the point of envy. (If so, he longs for and is envious of what?) The King James, like the American Standard, makes the sentence a direct quote. The Revised Standard does not make the sentence a direct quote, but makes it a question. (If the reader is not confused yet, let him look up a few more translations for himself!)

The clearer and most compatible rendering (to this writer) would be to say, "Or do you think that the Scripture (as a whole) speaks to no profit? The (Holy) Spirit which God made to dwell in us longs (for us) to (the point of) envy."

The preference for the above exposition rests upon the phrase "which He made to dwell in us." The gift of the Spirit is promised to those who are baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38). The Christian's body becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit which he has from God and which dwells in him. (I Cor. 6:19). The saint has the down payment of the Holy Spirit in his heart. (II Cor. 1:22). Since this is one of the major teachings of the New Testament, it seems most natural to understand that it is the Holy Spirit that God made to dwell in us, and He longs for our alienated affections even to the point of envy.

This longing and yearning of the Spirit (or God, if you prefer)

for the adulterous saint's affection is heart-breaking. In this longing we hear Jesus weeping over adulterous Jerusalem; and if we look closely, we will see His fresh tears to-day as countless members of His bride break His heart afresh. Oh, if we could only realize His love and understand His mercy. How we need to hear the groanings by which the Spirit makes intercession for us. The grace upon grace by which we live should break our hearts. Because He first loved us, we can now love Him with His kind of love. And we can love Him to the point of full surrender—to the point of keeping His commandments.

"But He (whoever was doing the longing in the previous verse) giveth more grace." This giving of grace comes from the Holy Spirit of verse five (or the Father), but certainly not from man's spirit. This reinforces the argument that it is not man's spirit in verse five that is longing. It is man that needs this grace because his adultery has caused the Spirit's longing. It is a greater grace (marginal reading) that this man needs, as if shown by his sin.

But what is this grace that is given? Grace is usually thought of as an unmerited favor of forgiveness. Justification and forgiveness are truly the greatest graces of all, but certainly not the only graces. Every good gift is from God, and is an unmerited favor. Having done all, I have earned nothing of His gifts. This grace is more likely the attributes necessary to be an overcomer. When a man returns back "home" to the Spirit that yearns for him, and yields himself in full surrender, then the Spirit favors that man with strength and help in living the surrendered life. He would never have the strength otherwise.

"Because of this (it) saith," probably refers to the Scripture; but here, unlike verse five, is a definite quote from Proverbs 3:34, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." If it is the Scripture that does the saying, then the subject immediately follows the verb. (The Greek verb is actually impersonal, with no subject: *it* says).

James' use of the Proverbs' quotation showing God (Jehovah) to be the author of grace is a direct implication of the deity of the Holy Spirit. This is true if the Holy Spirit is the author of the grace in 6a and the longing in 5. This is what should be expected when the unity of the Spirit and the Father are considered along with many scriptural implications concerning the deity of the Spirit.

The meaning of the proverbs' quotation is that the proud man

centers his life in himself and the gratification of his senses. He makes himself an enemy of God, so God resists him, or arranges Himself against him.

On the other side, the humble man is one who denies himself, and he is more likely to take up the cross and follow Christ. God gives him grace that he might do just this. It is this humble man that responds to the yearning of the Spirit, so the grace is given to him that his response might be complete.

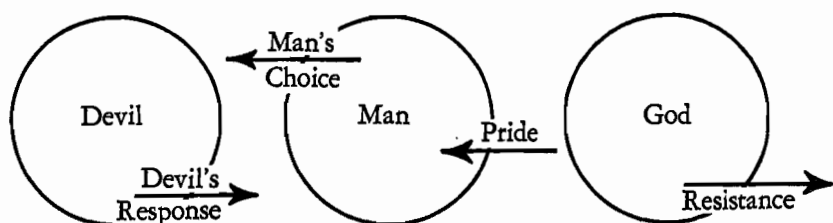
There is a very interesting relationship between the subjection and the resisting in verse 6b and 7: God sets Himself against those who set themselves against His authority. Pride and stubbornness make a man arrange himself against the authority of God; and like similar poles on a magnet, our repulsive action toward either God or the devil will likewise draw repulsion in return. Thus, when man is proud in resisting God, then God resists the proud; when man resists the devil, then the devil flees from man.

The opposite action is also clearly pictured: when man gives himself in subjection to God (is humble), then God gives grace. When man gives himself in subjection to the devil, then he is in turn devoured by the devil as by a roaring lion. Verse 8 clearly pictures the mutual attraction between God and man: "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you."

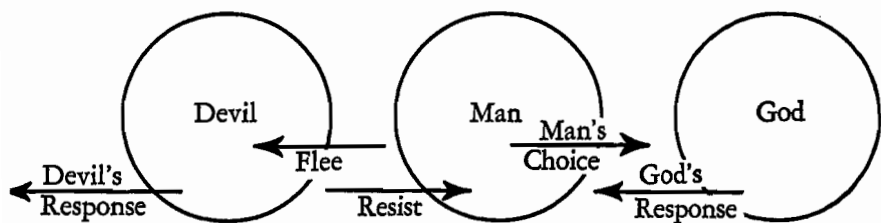
James makes it quite clear that God has allowed man to be master of his own destiny. Man's choice of heaven or hell rests on man's choice of God or the devil. The amazing thing about the entire system of grace is that God allows man to choose heaven and God's love even though man has earned the devil's destiny. The grace of God gives man the opportunity. The will and choice of man is the key. Man must choose to be with God, so God forces no man into heaven.

God's active participation in the redemption of man is clearly set forth many places in the Scripture. God calls, God loves, God gives grace, God saves. Although God's sacrifice and God's call are universal, the application of that salvation offered is *limited by man's own choice*. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve" is the plea double emphasized in the New Testament. This is the emphasis of James. James, however, is making very clear the principle that the choice of man is not manifest in a passive, non-participating faith. A wishful thought and a vague yearning for God in the man who continually surrenders his life and action to the devil does

## "Spiritual Adultery"



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"Draw Near to God"

not constitute a choice for God. We "draw nigh" with our active life, and we "cleanse our hands" with a repentant and pure life.

# FROM WHERE WE ARE TO WHERE WE SHOULD BE

## *Text 4:8b-10*

- 4:8b. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners: and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded.  
 9. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.  
 10. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall exalt you.

## *Questions*

318. "Cleanse your hands" obviously means something other than washing the hands with soap. To what kind of sins does the expression refer?  
 319. Who are the sinners referred to in v. 8?  
 320. Does "purify your heart" refer to the same thing as "cleanse your hands"?  
 321. Of what in the book of James does the expression "double minded" remind you?  
 322. What does it mean to "be afflicted"?  
 323. *Why* be afflicted?  
 324. Is there any difference between mourning and weeping?  
 325. Should one coming to Jesus in repentance always weep? When do you think some action other than weeping would be permissible?  
 326. Laughter over *what* is referred to in v. 9?  
 327. Abraham laughed and was not reprimanded, Sarah laughed and was reprimanded.  
 328. When might it be proper to laugh over something God has said?  
 329. Is James discouraging a Christian from laughing and having joy?  
 330. What is to be *heavy* in v. 9? (It isn't joy . . . joy is gone; but where was joy just before it left?)  
 331. Is the humility of v. 10 a character trait that James wishes the saint to develop, or is it a humble deed of some type he wants

performed? If a deed, what sort of deed would be a "humble deed"?

332. Is not all that we do in the sight of the Lord? Then why this particular admonition to so humble ourselves?
333. Does the Lord promise to exalt everyone who is humiliated?
334. What kind of exaltation should one expect of the Lord?
335. Note who is the author of this humiliation and of this exaltation.

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 4: 8b. Purify those ungodly hands, you sinning Christians, and set your heart right as well as your life; you have the mind to love the world as well as Christ.
9. Realize your wretchedness and weep; let the glad sound of your worldly pleasures be turned into mourning and your joy in spiritual adultery be turned to a downcast state of shame.
10. Bow to the will of God and He will lift you out of your downcast state.
- B.\*4:8b. Wash your hands, O sinners, and fill your hearts with God alone to make them pure and true to Him.
9. Let there be tears for the wrong things you have done. Let there be sorrow and sincere grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter and gloom instead of joy.
10. Then when you feel your worthlessness before the Lord, He will lift you up, encourage and help you.

### *Summary*

Repent of your adultery with the world, both in your heart and your life, and you can be renewed in your relationship to Christ as His bride.

### *Comment*

How the spiritual adulterer should feel, what his state is in relation to God, what has alienated him from God and what, in general, can draw him back to God has been discussed. Now James gets to the point of what to do about the condition. How can

the Christian who has been a friend (or has been flirting) with the world get from where he is to where he should be? He has been instructed to "draw nigh to God," but how does he go about this?

Repentance is the answer. Sinful deeds, sinful hearts, and double minds must be changed. James might have said, "repent and purify yourselves, and worship the Lord." His expression is much more colorful: "Cleanse your hands ye sinners."

Perhaps because man does so many things with hands, the hands have been, in literature of all times, symbolic of work and deeds. This is also true of the scripture.

The Jews had a custom of lifting their hands heavenward when they prayed. Paul, in saying that a man's prayer should be coupled with holy deeds, said "I desire therefore that men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands . . ." (I Tim. 2:8). Pilate washed his hands before the people, thus trying publicly to disclaim responsibility for the terrible deed of crucifying the Righteous One. Today we still use the expression, "My hands are clean," meaning "I didn't do it!"

So James says, "cleanse your hands." Evil deeds themselves must be put aside. The action by which the Christian shows friendship with the world must be changed. Sorrow is not enough; for it must be a Godly sorrow that leads to repentance of the deed. "Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (II Cor. 7:1).

Note that James is preaching repentance to the Christian. Here he calls the Christians ("among you," v. 1) "sinners." When the Christian sins and continues to sin, he is facing death itself. James closes with that warning in 5:19-20.

In addition to changing the deed, James says the heart must also be made right. Just as one can make himself an enemy of God by wishing to be a friend of the world (Note comments on 4:4) so also a man can make himself a friend of God by having his heart freed from contamination. Physical adultery can exist in the heart. Should a Christian continue loving and wishing for the sensuous satisfactions of this earth contrary to the Spirit of Christ then he is continuing in spiritual adultery, even if he no longer does the deeds which he longs to do.

This spiritual adultery of the heart is usually a part-time occupation. So the doubleminded is also admonished to cease embracing both God and the pleasures of sin. This doublemindedness is the

same as that described in 1:8. There it ruined the prayer life; here it makes the heart impure.

The condition of this adulterous Christian is really serious! He should honestly look at his state and see how wretched it really is. The "be afflicted" means to be in distress, or be wretched. A wealthy man who was on the verge of losing all his money on a poor financial venture would be in a wretched state. He would have a hard time sleeping and food would not digest in his stomach because of his unhappiness, his uncertainty. But what is this Christian about to lose? The "pearl with out price" has almost slipped from his grasp. He is about to lose the costliest gift ever given to any man: his soul's salvation. This should make him quake in his danger and fill him with misery.

Verse ten summarizes the solution. Our humility and subjection is to be toward the Lord and not toward the devil nor this world. This humiliation is an act of surrender, or resigning one's own will to the will of God.

In this, Christianity is different from all other teachings, for the road to mastery is a road of service. Success comes through recognition of failure. Righteousness comes only after one has recognized his true sinful state. Exaltation is given by God to those who humble themselves before Him. This is the reversal of all human judgment and wisdom. Has not man learned that "he who toots his own horn" the loudest shall be heard? Is not the road to success paved with the failure of others? So logic, as well as human nature, tells us that if we would succeed quickly we must do all we can to bring failure to others: our competitors!

Man is ever a miserable failure at exalting himself. The man who brags the loudest and seems most successful in exalting his own virtues ends up in isolation; being detested by his fellow men. And, even if he is right in his estimation of his own superior ability and decision, his accomplishments are resented and his decisions are unpopular.

On the other hand, humiliation before the Lord and loving service to fellow mankind brings exaltation for God and sincere appreciation from mankind, (or at least a portion of mankind.) This kind of subjection and service is not for the purpose of getting a seat at the head of the table, or on the right or left hand of Jesus in heaven. This subjection and service is accomplished because it is the heart's desire, and real joy comes from this action. There



would be pleasure in the subjection without the exaltation; and there would be a drive for loving service without the reward of appreciation. But how much sweeter these rewards make service! Great is the wisdom of God that by regeneration He would make His nature a pleasure for the Christian, and then give added rewards beside. God wants nothing but that which is good for us; and truly He will give happiness to us in as great an amount as our subjection to will allow.

4:11-12

## JUDGING OUR BRETHREN

*Text 4:11-12*

11. Speak not one against another, brethren. He that speaketh against a brother or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.
12. One *only* is the lawgiver and judge, *even* he who is able to save and to destroy: but who art thou that judgest thy neighbor?

*Questions*

336. If a brother has sin, does v. 11 forbid speaking against that sin?
337. What about the "law" would protect a brother from being spoken against?
338. What "law" is referred to? (Read the context before answering.)
339. What relation exists between speaking against and judging?
340. Would the particular defamation forbidden in verses 11 and 12 also be forbidden in dealing with the non-Christian? Why single out the brother in particular?
341. In what way is our relationship with a Christian different than our relationship with a non-Christian?
342. When one goes through life and is unaware of this difference in relationship is there something wrong? If so, what?
343. In what way could judging the brother be said to be judging the law?

344. Name some ways, other than judging the brother, in which a man can set himself up as a judge of the law.
345. Who is the one lawgiver and judge in v. 12?
346. In what way could v. 12 be said to be an admonition to search the Scriptures to see what God wants us to do?
347. How can you harmonize the proper rebuke of sin and correction of brethren (Titus 1:13; James 5:19-20) with verses 11 and 12?
348. Is there any difference in referring to the judgment God makes and in pronouncing the judgment one's self?
349. What is the relationship between 4:11, 12 and 4:1?
350. How could this kind of judgment referred to in 11, 12, engender strife and contention?

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 4:11. Stop speaking evil of your brother, and slandering him! For he that slanders a brother, thus judging him, is actually slandering the Word of God that forbids such judgment. A person that slanders, or judges, the Word of God is acting like a lawgiver instead of a lawkeeper.
12. There really is only one lawgiver and judge: for it is only God who is able save or destroy for eternity. Puny man! Who do you think you are when you act like you were God in judging your brother and God's word?
- B.\*4:11. Don't criticize and speak evil about each other, dear brothers. If you do, you will be fighting against God's law of loving one another, declaring it is wrong. But your job is to obey the law, not to decide whether it is right or wrong.
12. And He alone, Who made the law, can rightly judge among us. He alone decides to save us or destroy. So what right do we have to judge or criticize others?

### *Summary*

When you slander your brother you also slander God's Word which forbids it. Stop it!

*Comment*

He who really desires to remedy the strife within the church should give particular heed to these two verses. Slandering judgment of a brother betrays an attitude of arrogant assumption that can bring only resentment. This defamation is an assumption to be as God who gave and made the law. This was the sin of presumption of Moses, for which God said he should not enter into the promised land. "Shall *we* bring you forth water out of this rock?"

In sitting on the judgment throne with God and presuming to be a partner with God in lawgiving and judgment Moses brought God's wrath upon himself (Num. 20:10-12). We not only repeat Moses' sin but usually in a manner calculated to stir up strife and create ill will. Our sin is not a momentary assumption to be a partner with the lawgiver; but an assumed right to bring personal censorship and judgment against our brother that provokes both his wrath and God's!

This "speaking against" of verse eleven is really a very strong word. Perhaps "slander not another" would be more in keeping with the meaning than the milder "speak not against another." Since such a one, in acting as if he were immune from such mistakes, makes himself so unpopular it is amazing that the sin is so prevalent.

Why does man persist in doing that which brings him no reward from God, no good will from his fellow man, and no material benefit? Surely there must be a strong temptation involved in the action of slander, else it would not be a popular vocation. The reasons are probably psychological, and are based upon a rationalization of one's own condition. For one thing, a guilt complex might cause a person to sub-consciously assume a state of self-righteousness. Knowing he cannot be declared righteous by God nor by his own conscience, he finds a relative righteousness through accenting the sins of others. "At least I am better than they." Just a moment's reflection would help us recall that we are not able to climb into heaven on the shoulders of those we have shoved into hell. Since this is a subconscious temptation, the reasons are subjective and usually not thought out. The slanderer seldom examines his motives.

Another subjective temptation to slander (as psychologists often point out) may be to take the spotlight off one's own self. Fearing the censure of others, the slanderer strikes the first blow. He strives

to be so fast and furious with his accusations and defamation that his victims do not have time to take a careful look at their self-righteous judge. Perhaps in their desire for relief from the attack, they will refrain from bringing the proper rebuke and admonition to this sinner.

Of course, there is a fine line between defamation of character here spoken against and the proper admonition and rebuke of sinning brethren. Perhaps the greatest difference in the two actions is the motive. A Christian rebuke that comes from a desire of sincere love and a desire to bring blessings to a fellow saint is a virtuous action that James commends in 5:19-20. Yet the same rebuke that comes from a desire to cover up one's own sin, or to make oneself look good in comparison with the brother, (even if the rebuke is deserved) makes one a law-giver. He executes the law for personal reasons, ignoring the true author and intent of the law. He executes it against his brother for benefits to himself never intended by God who made the law.

"Though there is a fine line between the two actions, there is a great gulf between the results of the two actions. Proper admonition and rebuke given in love has a real opportunity to bring repentance and save a soul from death. Improper admonition given for selfish purposes brings only resentment and strife. The proper consideration in bringing rebuke is to "consider thyself, lest thou also be tempted." (Gal. 6:1).

Another result of this improper admonition for selfish purposes is that the brother is actually wronged in the charge itself. The truth of the sin is often stretched until the charge becomes a "half-truth half-lie" accusation. Since defamation of character is desired, the charge is pushed to the point of slander.

Again, repentance is not desired, as this would end the matter. Repentance will often be ignored; or no opportunity for correction given if the charge indeed has some truth attached. So the slanderer (assuming his charges to have some basis) actually hinders rather than helps the situation. He adds sin by creating a rift and hard feelings.

In summarizing this particular section (4:1-12), we might say that the Spirit warns that selfish pleasure brings trouble to the church. This selfish pleasure can only be overcome by a complete dedication to God—and God alone! So if we find ourselves in a posi-

tion of creating strife and contention out of our sensuous loves, we should repent. This repentance means resisting the devil and subjecting ourselves to God, both in heart and in actions. And there is a temptation even when we admonish and rebuke the sinning brother; for if this is done for the wrong purpose it brings trouble to the church and brings down the condemnation of God.

### *THIRTEEN THREE-POINT SERMON STARTERS*

#### **A WAR THAT MAKES WARS 4:1-2**

- A. War in your members, within your body. (4:1b).  
(Lustful pleasures that demand satisfaction).
- B. Lusting, killing, coveting, fighting, warring. (4:2a).  
(The coveting saint makes war with his brothers).
- C. Wars and fightings among the brethren. (4:1a).

#### **RESULTS OF LOVE FOR WORLDLY PLEASURES 4:1-3**

- A. No "peace that passeth all understanding."  
(They war in your members).
- B. Inability to obtain satisfaction.  
(Have not, and cannot obtain).
- C. Live in continual warfare.

#### **THE FRUITLESS LIFE OF A SENSUOUS MAN 4:2-3**

- A. He lusts . . . but cannot have that for which he lusts.
- B. He is jealous (kills and covets . . . but receives not in either case)
- C. He does or does not pray . . . but receives not in either case.

#### **THE ACTION OF A SENSUOUS MAN 4:3**

- A. A selfish "spending" of all his blessings.
- B. His prayer life, and entire spiritual life, is "amiss."
- C. He does not receive spiritual blessings from God.

#### **SPIRITUAL ADULTERY 4:4**

- A. The meaning of spiritual adultery.  
(Those who break marriage vows to God).
- B. The adulterous partner (The world).
- C. The consequences of spiritual adultery.  
(Friends of God's enemy, and an enemy of God).

## THE SPIRIT 4:5

- A. Given by God.
- B. Dwells within us.
- C. Yearns for our proper relationship with God.

## THE GREATER GRACE 4:6-7

- A. Power to resist the devil.
- B. Power to be subject to God.
- C. Given to the humble.

## THE MAGNET THAT WORKS TWO WAYS 4:7-8

- A. A magnet has two opposing poles. (Cannot love both God and man).  
(Does not attract another magnet at both poles, but attracts with one and repels with the other.)
- B. When we repel the devil, he repels us.
- C. When we draw near to God, He draws near to us.

## HOW A CHRISTIAN SUBJECTS HIMSELF TO GOD 4:7-8

- A. Draw nigh to God.
- B. Cleanse your hands.
- C. Purify your hearts.

## PRIDE, SIN, AND UNCERTAINTY 4:8-10

- A. The need of the proud saint. (v. 10).  
Humiliation of himself, exaltation of God.
- B. The need of the sinning saint.  
Cleanse his hands.
- C. The need of the uncertain saint. (v. 8).  
Purify his heart.

## A TIME TO WEEP 4:9

- A. When sensuous pleasures bring laughter.
- B. When things of this world bring joy.
- C. When the soul is afflicted with sin and in danger of destruction.

## THE JUDGE WHO SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN 4:11-12

- A. He judged his brother without authority.
- B. He broke the very law by which he judged.
- C. He shall be judged by the one true Judge.

THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE 4:12

- A. There is only one.
- B. He is able to destroy.
- C. He is able to save.

## CHAPTER IX

### PRETENDED DEBATE WITH A RICH UNBELIEVER

James 4:13-5:6

#### *Introduction:*

The title of this chapter is itself interpretive, and might introduce some discussion. There is no doubt but that James is here debating with a rich man; but is the rich man an unbeliever? Also, is this rich man present as James speaks, or present in the audience to which James writes? It would be better to settle these problems before beginning a more detailed study of the text.

The section in 5:1-6 is obviously addressed to the unbeliever. James here makes clear the calamities that are to befall him in the judgment so the persecuted Christian (to whom James is writing) will know that justice will prevail and that vengeance belongs to the Lord. After completing this section, he turns back to the Christian, and says, "Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord."

If 4:13-17 is addressed to the rich Christian, then there is a break of thought and a change of argument between the close of chapter four and the opening of chapter five. Verses 13 and 14 of chapter four are in the same vein of condemnation as is the chapter five section. This is not conclusive, of course, but it does seem to be the most obvious and intended meaning.

One might ask, "why argue with a person who will not hear the argument?" This is done for the benefit of the reader rather than the call to repentance of the rich persecutor. There is no admonition for correction, nor call to repentance, as James made to the Christians in 4:8. Furthermore, the "come now" with which he introduces 4:13 is repeated in 5:1, indicating James is speaking to the same persons in both sections. This entire section does not contain the word "brethren" which James uses or implies in nearly every paragraph of the epistle.

All this seems to indicate James is turning aside and speaking to an imaginary figure who will probably never see his epistle. The rich persons being condemned really do exist, but they are not



numbered among the brethren. So he tells the brethren what is going to happen to the rich man in this very dramatic fashion.

The style of argument is the diatribe of the Stoic philosophers. The debator turns to an imaginary opponent and argues with him as if he were present. It is a style of delivery that the Jewish and Greek speakers used often, and is effectively used by ministers and public speakers today.

The Christian at the time, even as now, was numbered from among the poorer classes of the world. His most avid persecutors were the enemies of Christ, especially religious people who followed some other doctrine than that of Christ. But the world was also filled with rich people who habitually made a practice of preying upon the poor. The rich man made no exception of the poor Christian. In fact, he was easy prey because of his meek demeanor. For this reason the Christian needed encouragement to hold fast to Christ in the midst of this ill treatment. The time would come when God's justice would prevail and the rich persecutor would receive that which he had earned. "So don't give up, brethren," says James, "for the Lord will come and make all things right." (See 5:7-8).

## THE PRESUMPTION OF PLANNING WITHOUT GOD

### *Text 4:13-17*

- 4:13. Come now ye that say, to-day or to-morrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and trade and get gain:  
14. whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.  
15. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will we shall both live, and do this or that.  
16. But now ye glory in your vauntings; all such glorying is evil.  
17. To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

### *Queries*

351. "Come now" is an interjection used to gain attention. What interjection would you probably use to gain attention today?

352. Comparing v. 13 with 5:1, what might be said about the financial status of the people addressed?
353. Is there any evidence in the section of v. 13 to 17 that shows the people addressed are rich? What?
354. Since James used the expression "today or tomorrow," do you think there was anything indefinite about *when* the rich would trade and get gain?
355. If the rich were making definite plans, then why does James say "today or tomorrow"?
356. What about verse 13 shows that definite plans for the future were made?
357. James is very indefinite in referring to these definite plans. Why?
358. Is James condemning the making of definite plans about the future? What is he condemning?
359. See if you can reword the question in the middle of verse 14 to make it a statement contained in the first sentence of the verse.
360. James says "ye know not what shall be on the morrow." Is this true of all men on earth? (Or does it only apply to these rich being addressed?)
361. What is the point of the question of verse 14?
362. "You are a vapor." What does this mean?
363. In verse 15 is James indicating that these words should be repeated before making plans for the future? If not that, then what does he mean?
364. What is the significance of "if the Lord Will"? (Can you expand the expression and put it into your own words?)
365. What are the "vauntings"? (i.e. what does the word mean?)
366. Over what vauntings are they glorying?
367. This vaunting is evil. Why?
368. What does verse 17 have to do with the argument that went before?
369. Is James giving added information in verse 17, or proving a point?
370. In either case, what is the added information, or what is the point?

*Paraphrases*

- A. 4:13. Come, come, now, you who plan your future trips and transactions even to the time that you shall do thus and so and even to the profit you shall make:
14. You don't know a thing that shall happen to-morrow, not even whether or not you shall be alive. You are like a breath of smoke that is seen for a moment and then disappears.
  15. You make your plans this way instead of saying, "If God sees fit to allow me, I shall live, and I shall do thus and so."
  16. Your plannings without God are really boasting in your arrogances: it is sin to boast against God.
  17. If you refuse to do that which you know to be right, it is sin.
- B.\*4:13. Look here, you people who say "Today or tomorrow we are going to such and such a town, stay there a year and open up a profitable business."
14. How do you know what is going to happen tomorrow? For the length of your lives is uncertain as the morning fog; now you see it, soon it is gone.
  15. What you ought to say is "If the Lord wants us to, we shall live and do this or that."
  16. Otherwise, you will be bragging about your own plans, and such self-confidence never pleases God.
  17. Remember, too, that knowing what is right to do and then not doing it is sin.

*Summary*

Listen, you who lay out your life without God. It is sinful and arrogant when you refuse to take God into your plans.

*Comment*

"Come, come, now" says James. In effect, you know better than this! Had he been speaking with our modern vernacular he might have said, "Listen here, now!" This kind of an expression was used to gain the attention of the hearer; and in this case, to get them to notice, he had begun a diatribe with the unbelieving rich. Today the expression is still quite common in the English language to

separate two opposing views when given by the same speaker in a public discourse, especially when the first view is incorrect and the second is correct. Here James seems to be using it to separate his real audience from his pretended audience.

Although the admonition given to the absent rich certainly applied to them, it likewise applies equally well to any Christian. If the shoe fits, wear it. But try it on for yourself! This practice of making plans for tomorrow without considering God's will and the fact that God may have other plans is not only arrogant and presumptuous of the rich, but a sin for the Christian (verses 16-17).

James is not concerned with any particular plan, but wishes to admonish all such planning. His "today or tomorrow" includes any definite plans, whether in the near future or the far future. To make such plans without taking into account the fact that God may have other plans is wrong.

The error is not confined to the unbeliever who is not present, but is a mistake often made by the Christian worker. Young men and women who plan to go to this or that mission field after so many years training should be warned not to make their plans too definite nor too inflexible. God, who holds the future, might have other plans for them. He then might open avenues of service and training that go unnoticed by the would-be missionary. The young Christian, having definite future plans of his own, counts all closed doors as obstacles which the Lord must remove before the saint can work in the field of his choice. His inflexible planning may blind him for years to the will of God and opportunities of service and he would thus bypass much work that could have been done for the cause of Christ.

The Christian who thinks he must work in this or that particular job may be committing the same sin. The church member who thinks he must spend the rest of his life in one particular locality may have planned this choice out of selfish motives rather than considering that God may reveal other plans as time passes.

God does not remove our will, but He leaves it up to our own will and intellect to seize opportunities of service which He places before us. Selfish desire and wilful planning can blind us to the will of God as effectively as any other sin. If we as Christians desire to work in another locality this desire may be so strong as to blind us to the opportunity in our own home or home town. Likewise, if we have a selfish desire to remain where we are at all costs, we may

ignore all opportunities of serving the Lord that are open to us elsewhere. God grant that our wills would be so submitted to Him that we would be willing to submit ourself to His plans whatever they might be.

This unwillingness to conform to God's will can cause the Christian untold worry. The self-willed saint suspecting that God may alter his own selfish plans, will often be overly concerned with worry over losing that which is of no spiritual significance nor lasting consequence. His prayer requests will reflect his planning to be arrogant rather than being the will of God. His work will be designed to achieve these inconsequential goals rather than to fit into an overall plan of God which he may not know in advance. For this reason he become an unhappy and thwarted worrier because he makes his plans without considering that God's will may be otherwise.

James' indefinite references show he is referring to any specific plans; thus his references are "today or tomorrow" (or "today and tomorrow"), and "spend a year there, and trade, and get gain."

"The fact of the matter," says James, "is that you do not know what is to happen tomorrow." The question that follows: "What sort (is) your life?" may also be a portion of the same sentence. James could be saying: "You do not know of the thing of tomorrow: what sort of life you will have." This is really a smoother reading and a likely meaning.

The question is not necessary to a proper translation. If the phrase "What sort is your life?" were made a separate sentence but not a question, then James might be saying, "The fact of the matter is that you do not know what is to happen tomorrow. How miserable is your life!" This would still be in keeping with the shortlived vapor that is described in the sentence that follows.

Whichever way the sentence is read, the meaning is consistent with the Scripture. There is no certainty of life, and we are not aware of all of God's plans for our tomorrows. These uncertainties are big *ifs* in our plans. God does not object to our making plans; but we should always consider the will of God, both in making our plans and in the possibility of changing our plans. The uncertainty is very vivid the way James puts it. "You *are* a vapor. . . .", using a metaphor (instead of a simile, "You are like a vapor . . .").

A mist, or breath of air, vaporizes immediately and vanishes; so also is our life's span in relation to eternity. Those who are spiritually discerning realize this and plan for eternity accordingly.

They plan their days as best they can, but always to His plans. Those who are "earthy" make their plans as if they were in complete control of tomorrows and God had nothing to do with them.

James says these plans made which ignore God are really boasting. The man who counts himself to be something when he is nothing is vaunting; and when he makes his definite plans discounting God, he is glorying in these vauntings. The fact that he is vaunting may imply that he does know better. He sins doubly. He sins in vaunting in the first place, and he sins because he knows he should honor God and he does not do so when he makes his plans. His sin is both a sin of commission and a sin of omission. Thus verse sixteen ties to verse seventeen.

## THE END OF THE UNGODLY RICH

### *Text 5:1-6*

- 5:1. Come now ye rich and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you.
2. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten.
3. Your gold and your silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony against you and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have laid up your treasure in the last days.
4. Behold the hire of the laborers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.
5. Ye have lived delicately on earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter.
6. Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous one; he doth not resist you.

### *Queries*

371. Where was the term "come now" last used? Why do you think it was repeated here?
372. What is the difference between "weep" and "howl"?
373. Is this "weep" any different from the weeping in 4:9? If so, what?
374. What are the miseries that have come upon the rich man? (see the close of Chapter 4).

375. What does it mean for something to be "corrupted"? (If you do not know, look it up in a dictionary).
376. What is the difference between the term "corrupted" of verse 2 and "rusted" of verse 3?
377. Can gold and silver really rust? Then why is the term used?
378. How could a rusty coin be a testimony against the rich?
379. Could this idea of "rusty coins" be a testimony against Christians today? How?
380. Evidently the rust from the coins will not really eat the flesh . . . but what does the expression mean? (Be careful, for remember the faithful Christian's body also rots in the grave!)
381. What does the expression 'as fire' tell us about the flesh being eaten?
382. How do the great material blessings of America make this a particular warning to the churches in America to-day?
383. What are the "treasures" of verse 3?
384. The last days in verse three can have several possible meanings. See if you can think of about three applications.
385. Why would James say "behold" when he already had the reader's attention?
386. In what way did the rich man practice fraud with his laborers?
387. What is the subject of "crieth out" in verse 4?
388. How could this possibly cry out? What does it mean?
389. Sabaoth does not refer to the Sabbath. Look it up in a Bible Dictionary to determine the true meaning.
390. How will this army react to the cries it hears in 4b?
391. How can a rich man "live delicately"?
392. Although you may not count yourself as being rich, would it be possible for you to live delicately today? (Don't look for the answer just by comparing yourself with some rich who you think have more delicate lives than you . . . but measure your own possibility of delicate living in terms of what the expression must mean.)
393. Is he condemning delicate living even though the money for it was not obtained by fraud?
394. "You have taken your pleasure" is evidently used in a bad sense. What kind of pleasure is here condemned?
395. Is it right to have any kind of pleasure? What?
396. In the days of "slaughter," what is to be (or being) slaughtered, and who does the slaughtering?

397. Do you think "a day of slaughter" refers to the rich man's death, or the final judgment? Why?
398. What class of people have the rich really condemned and killed?
399. In what way could it also be said they have condemned and killed Jesus?
400. "He doth not resist you" could mean he doesn't fight back. "Doth not" is present tense, suggesting it is still going on. How does this (or should this) fit the Christian's attitude toward his persecutors today?

*Paraphrases*

- A. 5:1. Come, come, now, you class of rich people, weep because of the future wrath of God, and shriek in the misery of what's coming to you.
2. Your wealth is rotten, and your expensive clothing is already moth-eaten.
  3. Your gold and silver coins are tarnished, and the rust of your money will be used as a testimony against you; and your well-fed bodies shall be eaten by this rust because you have treasured for yourselves the fire which shall be in the last days.
  4. Consider this now, how you have held back on the wages of your tenant farmers who worked so hard in your fields. The Lord of hosts has heard the cries for justice of them that harvested your fields.
  5. With these wages kept back you have lived luxurious and self-indulgent lives; you have fattened yourselves right down to the day of the slaughter of the Lord.
  6. You have continually condemned and killed the righteous class, and to this day your victims cannot stop you.
- B.\*5:1. Look here, you rich men, now is the time to cry and groan with violent grief in view of all the terrible troubles ahead of you.
2. For your wealth is rotting away, and your fine clothes are becoming moth-eaten rags.
  3. The value of your gold and silver is dropping fast, yet it will stand as evidence against you, and eat your flesh like



fire. That is what you have stored up for yourselves in that coming day of judgment.

4. For listen! Hear the cries of the field workers whom you have cheated of their pay. Their cries have reached the ears of the Lord of Hosts.
5. You have spent your years here on earth having fun, satisfying every whim, and now your fat hearts are ready for the slaughter.
6. You have condemned and killed good men who had no power to defend themselves against you.

### *Summary*

You rich people who have slaughtered the weak and innocent only fattened yourselves for the day of your own slaughter in God's judgment.

### *Comment*

In these six verses James continues his discussion with the non-present and non-Christian rich. His opening remark, "come now", is the same remark with which he started the discussion in 4:13. He is still discussing the same type of rich he mentioned in chapter two, who oppress the Christians and drag them before the courts. Here James is not concerned with their ungodly actions, but with their ungodly destiny.

Since the rich are not present, James must be speaking for the benefit of the Christian who will read his letter. Filled with frustration over an unceasing fraud at the hands of rich people, the saint might begin to wonder wherein is the justice of God. James makes it clear that vengeance belongs to Jehovah, and that Jehovah will exact payment for the oppressive and fraudulent treatment of others, Christian or not. The church of Jesus Christ must have the right perspective concerning the rich. Much of the epistle of James seems to be written for this purpose.

There is another perspective the Christian should vision correctly, also. This concerns the terrifying danger of riches. Money brings with it the ability to "make money". What we really mean when we say that money makes money, is that he who has money

can so manipulate his fellow man, and the law, so that he can make more money.

The rich can find legal loopholes about which the poor cannot even dream. The rich have plenty of time to scheme how they shall take money away from others. The poor man is so busy trying to earn his bread he has little time for such scheming. Money buys more than material possessions; it buys temptations, it buys smugness and self-satisfaction; it buys fraud and unChristian action. It also buys a great company of evil men who strive continually to encroach upon those same riches.

The weeping the rich man does is not a weeping of Godly sorrow, but a weeping over the terrible denunciation and future destruction predicted. It is not a sorrow over sin, but a sorrow over the results of sin. If the rich could really see their destiny and realize the justice that will be brought upon them, their weeping would reach the proportions of howling, or shrieking in terror. The miseries that shall come upon them are of such proportions that the very thought of it would make them howl like a dog that has just lost his tail.

Some commentators feel that the suffering herein described refers to the destruction of Jerusalem; or of the suffering the rich shalt have in the disappointments of this life. The language is so vivid, however, that both the magnitude and the certainty of the suffering would seem to indicate the justice of the judgment day when the Lord shall come again.

The corruption of their riches, the decay of the garments, of gold, and even the flesh of the rich man seem to indicate either a literal decay that shall be brought about by time; or a decay in the realm of spiritual values. In the latter sense, the good the riches could have done was not done, that the reward that could have come from proper usage is corrupted. The garments were used to nurture a body of sin and shameful oppression of the poor. The gold and silver were used to condemn, oppress, and persecute those that had little or nothing; and so their rust (misuse, if this view is correct) shall be a testimony against the rich man on the judgment day. Non use (i.e., non use for the purpose it should have been used) has caused the rust which is inclined to be a testimony to (or against) the rich.

In verse three, it is possible that the treasure laid up is the fire. If this is the intended reading, then the rust shall eat "your flesh

because you have treasured up fire". Thus the fire could be the fire of Gehenna—the torture of the lost. Whether the rust shall eat your flesh like (as) fire, or the rust shall eat your flesh because you have treasured up fire, the meaning is not materially changed. In a very striking and vivid description the Holy Spirit here informs the Christian that the rich persecutor's lot is not one to be envied, but rather one to be pitied.

It might seem that James here lays a charge directly against all rich people, but his context makes it quite clear that his charge is against the misuse of their riches. It *is* possible for a rich man to enter heaven, even though it will take special care and intervention of God Himself (see Matt. 19:23-26). It is also an established fact that the road to riches is so often a road of oppression of the poor and cheating and law circumvention. To become wealthy through covetousness or greed is idolatry. (Col. 3:5)

Rusted riches may also be laid to the charge of many wealthy people who die and leave their wealth to the State in taxes, or to relatives who are not Christian or who have no possibility of using it to glorify the cause of Christ Jesus. Many blessings also bring with them a charge of much responsibility. Worry over the possible misuse of fortunes has caused many rich folk (even Christians) to neglect and overlook the right usage of their fortunes. They finally die with their wealth giving no glory to God but all glory to the contentious and greedy spirit of the devil. No wonder God sees fit to keep so many of his own precious saints in a state that most of the world calls poverty. These saints are the truly rich, for God in His infinite wisdom has kept their lives beyond these temptations that they might not resist.

The rust of these condemned rich people is spelled out in verses four to six in very clear terms. They took advantage of their hired servants. These workmen needed their wages for their daily bread, yet they were robbed to add to the fat and delicate lives of their rich masters. The injustice done to the tenant farmer, or the hired man, will one day be made just. The cries of the persecuted poor will one day be the testimony that will cause the shrieks of their tormentors. The Lord of the Sabaoth will see to this justice. (Sabaoth means "armies" or "hosts").

The rich man who takes his pleasure now from the poor is simply fattening himself for the day of his own slaughter. He has fed him-

self on the wages of the poor, and prepared his heart like sheep prepared for the kill; and he is already in the chute heading for the great slaughter-house of the judgment day.

As a final tribute to the magnitude of the testimony against him, the Holy Spirit says "you have condemned, you have killed the righteous one". "The righteous one" could be a reference to the death of Christ through the death of His saints ("Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me" Matt. 25:40). Or, it could be referring to the suffering, even to death, of the righteous man that has been persecuted by the rich. Since this has been the subject of James, the latter seems to be the preferred meaning.

### *TEN THREE-POINT SERMON STARTERS*

#### THE PRESUMPTION OF MAKING PLANS WITHOUT GOD

4:13-17

1. What we will do. (Go to this city, spend a year, trade, etc)  
Do we really know what tomorrow will bring? v. 14a.
2. When we will do it. (Today; or tomorrow).  
Do we really know when we will die? v. 14b
3. Why we will do it. (To get gain).  
We should live to glorify Him. All other glorying is vain.  
v. 15-17.

#### WHAT IS YOUR LIFE? 4:14

1. It is yours, to plan and do with as you will.
2. Plans and preparations in this life are a shadow of what will come.
3. This life is a vapor, soon gone to be replaced by eternity.

#### WHAT WE KNOW OF TOMORROW 4:13-17

1. We think we know what we shall do. v. 13
2. We should know it is in God's hands, not ours. v. 14-15.
3. We can know the Lord's will for us in eternity. v. 17.

#### THE LORD'S WILL 4:15-17

1. We ought to be surrendered to it, whatever it is. v. 15.
2. Our own will and vaunting that is contrary to God's is sin. v. 16.

3. The Lord's will is good for me; to do good now and receive good in eternity. v. 17.

#### THE SIN OF OMISSION 4:17

1. What we know of God's will. (*To Him that knoweth.*)
  - A. The saint, having God's revelation, knows all things, or all He shall reveal. I John 2:20.
  - B. The sinner, having the testimony of creation, knows the power and divinity of God, even if he has not heard the Word. Rom. 1:20.
2. We do not that which we know to do. (*and doeth it not*)
  - A. The more we know of His revelation, the more we realize our transgression.
  - B. The uninformed sinner has not glorified God nor given Him thanks. Rom. 1:21.
3. We all sin.  
(But we have an Advocate and a propitiation. I John 2:1-2).

#### THERE SHALL BE WEeping AND HOWLING 5:1

1. Weeping for the spiritual torment and howling for physical torment.
2. The miseries of eternal condemnation.
3. They are surely coming upon the unjust and ungodly.

#### ROTTEN WEALTH 5:2-3

1. Riches are corrupted. (When they are ill-gotten).
2. Garments are moth-eaten. (When they foster selfishness and pride).
3. Gold and silver are rusted. (When they are not used to bless God).

#### TREASURES LAID UP 5:1-3

1. The bank that really counts is in heaven.
2. The treasures of joy laid up in Christ Jesus.
3. The treasures of fire and torment laid up for the devil.

#### THE LORD OF SABAOth 5:4

1. The "hosts" and "armies" of God.
2. The leader of His armies.
3. The enemy of His armies.

4:13-5:6

JAMES

DELICATE LIVING 5:5 (At the expense of others).

1. It is the taking of ones' own selfish pleasure.
2. It is preparing our hearts for a day of slaughter.
3. It is condemning and killing the righteous.

## CHAPTER X

### *RESIST FIERCELY, BRETHREN!*

James 5:7-12

#### *Introduction*

After the very vivid account of the vengeance that belongs to God, and the just judgment that will come to their persecutor, James turns back to the Christian brethren to whom he is writing. "Don't let them shake you loose, brethren!" "You hang on to the very victory that God has promised in the end. This victory is sure to come. God is still our leader and His oversight real. So don't murmur nor complain. The Judge has it all in hand, even as He did with the prophets of old. So let your word be as constant and sure as is His Word. Speak the truth without deception and remain on the victorious side of the Lord."

Not only does the Holy Spirit in this instance champion the justice that is sure to come against the persecutors, but He assures of the reward of grace that is to be received by His own. The noteworthy thing about the Biblical justice is that God is the judge and the avenger. Justice is His business and He assures us He will take care of it. He has not given to man the authority for vengeance. The sword He has put into the hands of governments is not for vengeance, but rather to give His own army a measure of peace and protection in carrying out the spiritual warfare of this life. Though the earthly murderers fear not the wrath of God, being unbelievers in His Word, they yet fear death through capital punishment and so are forced to inhibit, or at least hide, their murderous actions.

Another point of justice that is clear in both the book of James and in the other Scriptures is God's insistence upon social justice. In the Old Testament, as well as the New, the prophets have preached vigorously against injustices toward the poor. (Isa. 5:8; Amos 3:10; 5:11; 8:4-7; 11:28; etc). Feeding the hungry and caring for the orphans and widows (but not the indolent lay people) is a common concern of God's Word. A heart that weeps over the suffering of others is God's kind of heart. So it is that 'Jesus wept'. So it

is that He looked over Jerusalem and considered her destiny, and wept. So it is that the horrible lostness that is in the world today brings grief to Him, and to the saint who has His spirit as well. But His weeping over Lazarus' death was a grief for the suffering relatives that were left broken hearted. Jesus wept because they suffered.

How often the church neglects this sympathy that is to be shared with Christ. How often the needy are overlooked, and those who suffer for physical needs and in bodily torments are neglected by the prosperous church. Not only do the saints often neglect the visitation and encouragement to the saints in the "old folk's homes", but they often send their own members and relatives to be among those numbers who are forgotten and neglected. Countless numbers in the hospitals who could be won to Christ in their great physical distress are often left to suffer alone. The saints will rally in support of a dramatic case of need reported in the newspapers but they as often neglect the unadvertized and numberless needy on their very doorsteps. "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction . . ." James 1:27. The gospel is damaging for social justice, and we do not need the "Social Gospel" to develop this facet of Christianity. The Holy Spirit has already done so in the Word of God. Nor must we use rejection of the Social Gospel as an excuse for neglecting our plainly revealed duties for sympathetic help to the needy and fair treatment of those who are less fortunate and at our mercy.

## HOLD YOURSELF IN CHECK

### *Text 5:7-9*

- 5:7 Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receive the early and latter rain.
8. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord is at hand.
9. Murmur not, brethren, one against another that we be not judged: behold the judge standeth before the doors.



*Queries*

401. From your previous studies in this book, see if you can remember the true meaning of "patience" as it is used in the Scriptures.
402. To whom is James speaking in verses 7ff?
403. What is a "husbandman?" (If you are not sure, the context explains it. Note what the husbandman does).
404. How does the "coming of the Lord" in this section tie in with the warning to the rich in the previous section?
405. Note the "therefore" that introduces the reason for the former debate with the non-present rich unbeliever.
406. What is the reason given?
407. With what is Jesus comparing the end of the world in verse 7?
408. Note the repetition of the word "patient" in both the admonition and the illustration.
409. When the husbandman is "patient" over the fruit of harvest to come, what does this signify? (Remember the Biblical meaning of "patience").
410. v. 8 says "be ye also patient," why do we need this admonition?
411. How can we "establish" our hearts?
412. How can he say "the coming of the Lord is at hand" when Matt. 24:29ff says that certain things will come to pass before the coming of the Lord?
413. Was the coming of the Lord really "at hand" when nearly two thousand years have passed since this was written?
414. Is the coming of the Lord "at hand" today? What would we do in preparation?
415. How would the expected coming of the Lord keep the brethren from murmuring?
416. What might tempt us to murmur against one another?
417. For what were the Israelites judged in the wilderness? (See Num. 14:29; Deut. 1:27; I Cor. 10:10).
418. What is the significance of the phrase "standeth before the doors"?

*Paraphrases*

- A. 5:7. Don't be quick-tempered, but hold your mind in check until Christ is present again. See how the farmer does not ex-

pect his harvest on the day he plants but he is longsuffering in watching for it, giving it time to mature after the spring and summer rains.

8. In the same way you should hold yourself in check, also; and strengthen your spirits: for Christ will soon be present with us.
9. Don't groan in complaints because of your impatience, brethren, or you will risk the condemnation of the Lord when He comes. Consider He is just around the corner and could come at any moment.

B.\*5:7. But on the other hand, you, dear brothers, be patient until the Lord returns. Be like a patient farmer who expects to wait until the autumn for his precious harvest to ripen.

8. Yes, be patient. And take courage, for the coming of the Lord is near.
9. Don't grumble about each other, brothers. Are you yourselves above criticism? For see! the great Judge is coming, He is almost here; (let Him do whatever criticizing must be done).

### *Summary*

And now brethren, speaking to you: be patient and constant with mutual forbearance; in view of the certainty and nearness of Christ's coming.

### *Comment*

When James here says, "Be patient therefore . . ." he uses a different word for patience than the ordinary word used in the Scripture. The ordinary word means to stick like glue, or to hang on like a bulldog. This word, however, leans a bit closer to our modern usage of the word patience. It means to have submission, or be long-tempered. There still is a close relation in the meaning of the two words with more similarity than difference. In the middle of the verse James uses the same word to describe the submission to circumstances of the husbandman.

There certainly is a sense in which the Christian should be meek and submissive; and this is one of them. When the circumstances of

our environment become trying for us, we should execute all the more control to be meek and submissive to the will of the Lord. If we are convinced that God cares for us constantly and that all things both in heaven and on earth are under the authority of our Lord Christ Jesus, we should be all the more careful to be willing to submit ourselves to the trying circumstances He sees fit to allow us to bear. The key to contented living on this earth is not avoidances of trials, but rather the submission to the will of Christ that makes us content in whatever state we find ourselves. Impatience makes a person short-tempered; but James says here we should be long-tempered.

The reason for this holding of our mind in check is that the Lord will soon come. It will not be long, so hold out till He comes. Like a mother comforts her sick child, "It will be just a few minutes, honey. The doctor just phoned and said he was on his way over. Don't cry, because I think I hear him coming now!" So James comforts us in our trials of this life.

"Isn't it deceptive?" you may ask. "James said He was coming soon. Now nearly two thousand years have passed, and He hasn't come yet!" True enough. In Matt. 24:15-22 Jesus makes it clear that the imminent destruction of the temple would take place before the end of the world. After that, He could be expected at any moment. His coming would be sudden and would take people by surprise. James was not deceptive, however; for His coming was soon or imminent. And it still is. The admonition was not to watch for He would certainly come within a few days, but rather to "watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh." (Matt. 24:42) Jesus could come shortly from the time you read this; or it could be that He shall come before you ever get opportunity to read this. Then again, it may be years away. Our business is to watch and be ready.

The illustration, like all of those Jesus uses, is very vivid and simple. The farmer does not begin to rail nor show impatience with his wife because there are no crops the week after he has planted. He patiently waits for the normal seasons of rain and sun. His patience holds out even through the second rainy season and the second crop.

Palestine, like many areas the world over, has two rainy seasons for crop growth, thus the reference to the "early and latter rain." Grain was usually planted in time for the fall rains and matured with the latter rain of Spring. Even as the farmer is patient in waiting

for his crops, so must we be patient in waiting for the Lord.

One of the immediate results of lack of patience is groaning in complaint. This murmuring often makes life miserable for those who are closest. In the church it takes the form of groaning against a brother. It is as if he were at fault. He is present and it is the most convenient opportunity for venting the impatience. Likewise, husband or wife may have the same impatient reaction against the one who is most convenient to them. The lack of contentment becomes a miserable tirade against the one they love best. Since such loose usage of the tongue is clearly forbidden in the Scripture, the saint's impatience may make him in danger of the judgment. Since the judge can be expected at any moment, why let the impatience lead him to action over which he may be judged?

## VICTORY WILL COME, FOR GOD IS REAL

### *Text 5:10-12*

5:10 Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and patience, the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord.

11. Behold, we call them blessed that endured: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful.
12. But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgment.

### *Queries*

419. What noteworthy example of hardship is omitted here but not in I Pet. 2:21ff?
420. Why were the O.T. prophets a good example to take?
422. The word for patience in 5:11 is the usual word meaning to hold tight without giving in. How is this descriptive of Job?
423. Is the teaching in verse twelve of special importance? Why (from the verse itself) must this be?
424. Solemn and serious civil and religious oaths or vows were taken on the name of God or His Word, and they still are. Why do you think this particular oath is not mentioned in verse twelve?

425. Is the subject really swearing, oath-taking, or truth-telling?  
426. What connection is there between swearing and lying?  
427. What are some of the similarities between this verse and Matt. 5:33-37?  
428. Where is lying introduced into the verse?

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 5:10 For an example of a continued faith while enduring suffering, consider the Old Testament prophets. They continued to testify of God in the midst of their suffering.
11. Look how we call God's praises upon them because of their endurance. You have heard how Job was stubborn in clinging to the Lord; and you have read how God's mercy and pity gave Job a double restitution because of His purpose.
12. And more than this, brethren, watch your daily speech that it is not sprinkled with the double standard of oaths for speaking the truth that you might have an excuse to lie. When you say something, let it be the truth, and this swearing and oath-taking will not be necessary.
- B.\*5:10. For examples of patience in suffering, look at the Lord's prophets.
11. We know how happy they are now because they stayed true to Him then, even though they suffered greatly for it. Job is an example of a man who continued to trust the Lord in sorrow, and from his experiences we can see how the Lord's plan finally ended in good, and that the Lord is full of tenderness and mercy.
12. But most of all, dear brothers, do not swear either by heaven or earth, or anything else; just say a simple "yes" or "no," so that you will not sin and receive God's curse.

### *Summary*

When we consider the Old Testament examples we know that God's purpose is to make everything right. So let our word be as constant and sure as these prophets and we will avoid the common practice of swearing and oaths taking.

James is still referring to how to act under adversity. The major example of adversity of having one's wages withheld will be added to in the last portion of the chapter. Here he seems to still be commenting upon this particular problem.

The prophets, because of their very vocation, suffered the brunt of persecution. Through all of this they refused to murmur against the Lord; but rather continued to speak in His name. It has always been that a man who will take a definite stand, especially on matters pertaining to godliness, will make enemies. He makes the same enemies Jesus made, and in a sense bears the same kind of a cross. This is the plight of all who name the name of Christ as their own, and it must be so. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:24-25).

The Job reference uses the same kind of "patience" that is most commonly used in the New Testament. This refers to his determination to hang on through all sufferings. He clung to the Lord like a bulldog, and the devil could not shake him loose.

The important part of the illustration is that Job's patience was rewarded by the Lord according to the will of the Lord. The *end* of the Lord refers to the *purpose* of the Lord. We have seen the purpose of the Lord in the account of Job: to benefit all on the Lord's side, including Job.

The *end* of the Lord could also refer to what happens in the end of the matter, or the end of time. Job was rewarded at the conclusion of his suffering; and such is always the "end" of the Lord. The end of the matter is not always apparent on this earth, however. In the case of the oppressing rich men just discussed, the end of the matter is in the judgment. If heaven is my home and joy unspeakable and full of glory is my destiny, by what ingratitude do I demand it all here and now?

If verse twelve is a continuation of the admonition on how to act in adversity, then its meaning is quickly determined. The prophets continued to speak in the name of the Lord when they were persecuted. Likewise we must continue to let our speech be honest and truthful regardless of the persecution.

The common practice of that day (and today?) was to use a

double standard of speaking. A "good" (?) business man was expected to lie concerning his business. If a man wanted to verify the fact that he was really telling the truth and not speaking out of the corner of his mouth, he would use an oath. Swearing and oath-taking became so common that if a man really wanted to deceive his fellow man he would sprinkle his conversation with oaths. At the trial of Jesus when the maid accused him of being one of the men with Jesus, on the second accusation Peter not only denied being with the Jesus, but did so with an oath (Matt. 26:72). On the third occasion when he was accused of being a friend of Jesus "then he began to curse and to swear, I know not the man." (Matt. 26:74). The oath here, as in many cases, was used as a clear effort to deceive.

Had Peter spoken the truth there would have been no need for an oath. They would have believed him anyway at once. The Christian should have his practice of always speaking the truth. When he says yes, he should mean yes. If he denies something, then those who know him know that his denial is the truth.

Most commentators do not believe that this prohibition is referring to the civil and religious oaths or vows that solemnly use the name of God for court uses. There is no mention of an oath that invoked the name or Word of God. We would expect that it would not be mentioned, for the Jews were by tradition most careful not to use God's name lightly as in street usage or common swearing. The point of the teaching is in the last part of the verse: "let your yea be yea and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgment." It would seem that this is an application of the example from the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Certainly if this teaching leaves any man with a conscience against taking the solemn oaths of the courts, then it would be a sin to him even if this were not the intended meaning of the text.

If this verse is not a continuation of the former discussion, and has as its main purpose any oath-taking rather than truth-telling, then the meaning becomes more difficult to ascertain. Some commentators are convinced the teaching is against the solemn and serious civil oaths that use the name of God, or His Word. If this be the case, then James has interspersed his teaching on the consistent speech of the Christian with a subject that seems to be "stuck in," or somewhat out of context.

Lest we be led astray on our consideration of the extent of the

prohibition, we should humbly concur that James is emphasizing the importance of telling the truth under all circumstances. A man may sometimes hold his own council, but he should never lie.

It is far better to make no reply to a question as Jesus did at His trial, than to make a false statement as Peter did at the same trial. The first can be altogether right, where the latter is always wrong. May God help us to be as constant in our word as is our Lord. May we never say yea when we know nay is the answer, nor nay when we know yea is the answer. Since our business is not deceit, but truth-telling, then common oaths and swearing need not be a part of our vocabulary.

### *FIVE THREE-POINT SERMON STARTERS*

#### **WHY BE PATIENT? 5:7-8**

1. The Lord is coming 5:7a
2. We have the examples -
  - a. From the Scripture.
  - b. From the farmer.
3. Precious fruit comes later 5:7b

#### **THE REWARDS OF IMPATIENCE 5:7-12**

1. Murmuring against the brethren 5:9.
2. Miss the pity and mercy of the Lord 5:11.
3. The precious fruit of the merciful is lost 5:7b, 12b.

#### **CHRISTIANS TELL THE TRUTH 5:12**

1. No need to confirm his speech with oaths.
2. His reputation is worth more than the oath of the liar.
3. He is not under the condemnation of the liars.

#### **THE JUDGE 5:7-12**

1. He is the Lord Jesus Christ 5:7-8.
2. His judgment will come at any moment.
3. His judgment is to be feared 5:12b.

#### **SWEAR NOT 5:12; Matt. 5:33-37**

1. Avoid all oaths.
2. Avoid the appearances of evil in loose talk.  
(Cheese, for Jesus; Gosh or Golly for God, etc)
3. Avoid the condemnation of God.



## CHAPTER XI

### FIVE REMEDIES FOR THE CHRISTIAN

James 5:13-20

#### *Introduction*

The trying situation in which the greedy rich have with-held wages from the poor has already been discussed by James. Following this, he admonishes the saint to be patient in his Christian life during this suffering. Christ will soon come, and the suffering will not be long.

Having given this general instruction, James now proceeds to list five differing situations of this life in which the Christian might find himself. In each situation, James gives a recommended action. Four of the five situations are adverse, so the action recommended may be said to be a remedy. One of the situations (happy, or merry) recommends an action that will enhance the situation rather than remedy it.

In all of these situations, Christ is the author of the solution. Whether giving Him praise, requests in prayer from Him, asking His intercession, or requesting strength and wisdom, He remains the Great Physician. He lifts the burden, heals the wounds of the soul, administers to the sick, and patches up the broken remains of quarreling saints. In Him, truly, the saint can live and move and have his entire existence. To live in, with, and for Christ is to have the peace that passes all understanding. There is no joy that compares to the joy unspeakable, and no hope other than hope through Him.

It is very fitting that this practical instruction from the pen of James should come to its conclusion with the most useful admonition of all. Here is real help for the saint in need. We not only have the source of the medicine given, but are told how to mix and apply it. It is like a string of jewels, each one beautiful as it fills its place on the string. Then, hanging at the end, are five of the most beautiful gems of all. Each one, clear and sparkling, promises joy and peace to its wearer. This is a necklace whose value is more than rubies. It is a chain of jewels for the child of the King!

Many commentators prefer to read this portion of the book as partly applying to Christians of all times, and partly applying to only

the early church under the guidance of the special spiritual gifts. This author prefers the view that if a large part of these special instructions apply to the church of all times, then it is probably intended that the entire instruction applies to the church until Christ again comes.

## WHEN THE SAINT SUFFERS

### *Text*

5:13a. Is any among you suffering? let him pray.

### *Queries*

429. Does not every Christian, even every person, suffer? Then why the question?
430. What does the King James translation say instead of "suffering"?
431. To whom is this question addressed (i.e. to what group of people?) How do you know?
432. For what do you think the suffering saint should pray?
433. The real problem with the sufferer is not the suffering, but something else that arises out of the suffering. What is the real problem with the sufferer?
434. Do you think James is referring to private prayer, public prayers, or both?
435. Do you think this solution applies to all types of suffering the Christian may meet, or only to certain cases?
436. Would this instruction to pray also apply to the Christian situations that follow in the epistle?

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 5:13a. Is there any among you Christians suffering a calamity of any sort? Then he should pray concerning it.
- B.\*5:13a. Is anyone among you suffering? He should keep on praying about it.

### *Summary*

When you suffer, pray!

*Comment*

James here bridges the instruction formerly given about suffering because of wages with-held and the instruction to follow about sickness, contention, and sin. The bridge is general instruction about suffering or being in good spirits.

The instruction about suffering seems to cover a calamity of any sort whatever. *Anything* that would cause the Christian's spirit to sink would be a calamity of sorts. Psychological turmoil, work pressure, physical pain and sickness, spiritual shortcoming—these all would be included. Calamity caused externally would also cause this suffering; a loss of money, an enforced move, a job transfer, out of work, evil accusations, persecutions, etc.

When we look at the number of situations that would be covered by this general instruction, the amazing thing is that Christians do not pray far more often. It is almost as if the Holy Spirit had made a "doctor's call" and had prescribed a medicine to be taken constantly.

The King James version here tends to limit the type of suffering intended: but most certainly affliction is included. Of all suffering, affliction is one of the hardest to bear. This is the type of suffering Paul refers to in Hebrews 10:32ff when he says, "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings . . ."

Many of the early Jews received affliction at the hands of their family and the Jewish religious leaders when they became Christians. Some were disinherited and disowned, losing their family standing. Paul goes on to describe the affliction; "partly, being made a gazingstock both by reproaches and affliction; and partly, becoming partakers with them that were so used." (Heb. 10:33).

It is not uncommon in this age for young people, especially teenagers, to suffer hardship akin to this when they decide to put on Christ. It would seem that parents often fear the light of the gospel that shines through their children, thus exposing their own disobedience to God. With the prospect that their children might become Christians, parents many times will forbid their children to attend church services, or summer Christian youth camps. It is not uncommon for parents to forbid their children to be baptized into Christ; often with threats ranging all the way to disinheritance.

This type of hardship, which we call affliction, is especially hard to bear. It is suffering for righteousness' sake. It is suffering that has

not been earned. It is suffering at the hands of gainsayers and sinners who strike out at the light of Christ Jesus. It is the suffering of punishment where there was only love and good will given. It is the suffering of Christ. It is His cross!

Naturally, the remedy for such a hard affliction would be found through Him who showed us the way. No man ever suffered with such innocence and such intensity as did Christ. Being completely without sin, He suffered as if He had all sin. He bore the results of every man's sin on His innocent shoulders. He knows how to bear this cross, for He bore it. If any among you Christians suffer, let him pray to God through Jesus Christ who understands all our suffering.

#### WHEN THE SAINT IS HAPPY

##### *Text*

5:13b Is any cheerful? let him sing praise.

##### *Queries*

437. Can this saint who is cheerful be the same one who is suffering in the first part of the verse? (Think carefully)
438. About what can the saint be cheerful?
439. Will singing help a person even when he might not feel as cheerful as he would wish in the beginning?
440. What other good will singing about it do?
441. Isn't one song as good as another to sing? Why so or why not?
442. Just what do you think the Christian should sing when he sings praises?
443. What do you think Paul and Silas were singing about in Acts 16:25?
444. What did they have to pray about? (Note that they were both singing and praying).

##### *Paraphrases*

- A. 5:13b Do any among you Christians have joy in your hearts? Then let your joy in Christ spill out in song so that you can share it with others.
- B.\*5:13b Those who have reason to be thankful should continually be singing praises to the Lord.

*Summary*

When you are happy in Christ, sing it!

*Comment*

This admonition to sing seems to be in contrast with the first part of the verse. As such it would be a simple statement: "When you suffer, pray; when you are happy, sing." Such a simple approach might seem trite, or unnecessary for it is so natural and obvious. Doesn't the whole world of people sing when they are happy? Will not most people turn to God in the time of suffering?

There is more here than the superficial joy that the man of the world may have in the moment when he forgets the seriousness of life and death. Often the first taste of sin may appear to bring joy, and the drugs and drink people take because of their unsolved problems may seem to bring a moment of cheer in the process of dulling the conscience and erasing the memory temporarily. It is not this giddy forgetfulness or temporary involvement in sensuous pleasure that brings the joy about which James speaks. It is the abiding joy that comes from a contemplation of a saint's family relationship with God. It is a deep-seated rejoicing in the glory that is to come to all of God's own people. It is "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

This joy comes from a peace a man has in his heart because he is right with his Maker. The peace is so great his soul is tranquil in the midst of suffering and persecution. Sickness does not remove it. Prisons, swords, and bullets do not kill it. Water will not quench it, nor fire consume it. It is a "peace that passeth all understanding."

Paul and Silas has this kind of joy in their hearts. With flesh bleeding and some of their very back muscles torn from the terrible lashing, they lay on the damp prison floor. Their feet were enclosed in miserable stocks that prevented their moving about. The darkness of the inner prison pressed down upon them as if to smother them with the very lack of light. And the Scripture says of them "about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them." (Acts 16:25). What a testimony concerning the extent of joy in Christ Jesus!

What is to be sung should also be considered. The Greek word (*psalleteo*) from which we get the phrase 'let him sing praise' has the significance of 'to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in

song' (Thayer, *Greek Lexicon*) in its New Testament usage. Properly, the word meant to 'play on a harp', but in the New Testament, as in James 5:13 'sing a hymn' (Moulton and Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*).

The usage here, is to sing praises unto God. The Christian who is happy in Christ would properly and naturally want to share his joy with others. If he would do this in song, then the words he sings should carry this meaning.

How many times do Christians forget this simple truth? Feeling an elation and peace because of their relationship with God, they pick from the radio or television the most popular hit of the day to express their joy. What they say through their song is not joy in Christ Jesus, but joy in sensuous pleasure. This they may not mean, but it is what they testify. 'Is any cheerful? let him sing *praise*.'

Then again, how careless we often are with the words of even the hymns we sing. All kinds of doctrines and religious beliefs are put to song, and many of them can be found in most hymn books. Some are related to pantheism, with the 'I see God everywhere' theme. Others, though honoring the person of Christ Jesus, will dishonor His Lordship by denying the necessity for the surrendered and obedient life. We can dishonor Him by using a tune that reminds the world of sensuousness or we can dishonor Him by failing to see that the words we often sing are contrary to His teaching.

The point of the text is not limited to what is sung during worship services, but what is sung at any time. What *kind* of joy do we exhibit with our singing? Our joy is *in whom*? *Why* are we joyful? Let us be honest with the messages we tell through what we sing!

## WHEN THE SAINT IS ILL

### *Text*

- 5:14 Is any 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:
15. And the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him.

*Queries*

445. What sick people are addressed here, Christians, non Christians, or both? How do you know?
446. In this case who is it that asks for help?
447. Whom does he ask?
448. Is this instruction for a 'healing meeting'?
449. If not, why not?
450. Does the sick man go to the elders, or the elders to the sick man?
451. For what do you think the elders pray?
452. Does this Scripture indicate whether or not the healing will be through natural means or through miraculous instantaneous recovery?
453. How many other reasons for anointing a person with oil can you recall from the Scriptures? (Name them, if any).
454. What does the word 'anoint' mean? (First, give what you think is the first meaning, then look up the word in a good English dictionary and see what first meaning is given. Then note the second meaning).
455. Is it possible that the kind of oil used might contribute to the healing? (If so, in what way?).
456. What is anointing in the name of the Lord? (i.e. tell what a person would *do* when he anointed in the name of the Lord that would be different from anointing without the name of the Lord).
457. In verse fifteen, we are told that something shall save him. Save him from what?
458. What is it that the verse says shall save him?
459. Will this thing actually do the saving, or does something else do the saving through this thing? (Read the rest of the verse before you answer).
460. Does this verse imply that sin has caused the illness?
461. Could it be possible that this sick person does not have sins at this time for which he needs forgiveness? (What in the verse might imply so?).
462. Do you think the elders might have prayed for his forgiveness as well as his healing?
463. Does this text indicate yes or no to the last question?
464. Is this forgiveness automatic because he is sick, or could some

condition apply before he is forgiven? (What conditions, if any?)

465. How could conditions to which he must conform before he is forgiven really apply, when this verse does not state it to be so?
466. Who will do the forgiving?

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 5:14 Are any of you Christians sick? If you are, then ask for the elders of the church, having applied oil in the name of Jesus, to come and pray over you.
15. And the prayer of those who trust in God shall be answered in that Jesus will heal the sick and raise him from the sick bed; and if he needs forgiveness and spiritual strengthening at the same time, this too shall be given him.
- B.\*5:14. Is anyone sick? He should call for the elders of the church and they should pray over him and pour a little oil upon him, calling on the Lord to heal him.
15. And their prayer, if offered in faith, will heal him, for the Lord will make him well; and if his sickness was caused by some sin, the Lord will forgive him.

### *Summary*

When Christians are sick they should ask the elders to come and pray for them, for it is God that heals.

### *Comment*

Verses fourteen and fifteen present a problem in that it is difficult to determine the exact meaning intended. There are several possibilities of meaning, and it seems that some of the various interpretations given go beyond proper exegesis. The problems involve exactly what is meant by anointing with oil; and in what way God will heal the sick. If the healing is miraculous, then we have the question of whether or not the instruction was intended for the church today. If so, then miraculous healing is valid today, or at least intended to be.

Momentarily discounting the problems, there is here some very



valuable information. For one thing, this is not a healing meeting. Nowhere does God instruct the church concerning a meeting where the sick people are told to attend for miraculous healing. There is no example of the New Testament church having such a meeting. The sick Christian is not instructed to attend a church meeting where he will be publicly healed. The elders do not call for the sick, but the sick for the elders.

"Among you" is a phrase that indicates the sick person who is asking for such help is a Christian. He calls for the elders of his local congregation with whom he has, and has had, mutual fellowship and spiritual guidance. Prayer is not a strange thing to this sick person and he is not requesting healing from a stranger-God, but from a heavenly Father and a personal Savior. The sickness is illness of body and not a figurative representation of some spiritual need.

Concerning the anointing of the oil; this may be applied in a figurative sense representing medicine given, or the oil may be the medicine itself, or the oil may be applied as a ceremonial function, as when kings and priests were appointed to office.

The first two instances seem the most likely as the application of oil to the sick and wounded was, and still is, done for medical purposes. Mark 6:13 is such an instance in the New Testament. Here the oil is either applied representative of the medicine given, or is the medicine itself.

In Luke 10:34 there can be no question but that the anointing oil is medicine applied directly in the wound. The wine was poured into the wound because of the alcohol content. The antiseptic qualities in the wine served to cleanse the wound and kill the infection. This procedure is often painful (as we know from the application of alcohol today) and continues to burn for some time since the wound is exposed to the air. Application of oil, or any type of ointment that is not readily dissolved by water, serves to cut off the exposure to the air and air-borne infections. The oil feels soothing as well as being medicinal.

The fact that God does the healing in James 5:15 in no way implies that medicine could not be given. Medicine does not have power to heal within itself that operates outside the jurisdiction and blessing of God. In fact, it is the writer's opinion that *any* sick person who overcomes his illness does so only because he has received such blessing from God. From the moment a person becomes a sinner, he is under the spiritual death penalty. The penalty of physical

death we have inherited from Adam; every descendant of Adam is subject to the dying process. Any delay in this death process is by the mercy of God that there might be time remaining either to repent or to do His work.

"Then, why need the Christian pray?" you may ask. God does answer prayer, and may give the Christian healing in answer to his prayer when healing would not have been given otherwise. In addition to this, the Christian *knows* who is his Great Physician, and has the specific responsibility both for seeking the blessing of healing from its source, and of giving Him thanks when the blessing is given.

Just as important, the Christian is not to tempt God by refusing to do his part in the acquisition of the blessing. "God helps those who help themselves" is an old saying that has much truth. Satan tempted Jesus by asking Jesus to cast Himself down, thus deliberately seeking the interference and help of angelic beings where such help was unnecessary. If Christians should deliberately refuse to consult a physician or apply medicine, demanding that God do it all and that they will do nothing, this is a form of tempting God.

Some go even further by deliberately injuring themselves and demanding that God do the healing. This is such an outright tempting of God that it is a wonder that God does not immediately leave them all to die on the spot. An example of this is the handling of poisonous snakes. Such handling is not necessary and has no purpose other than to demonstrate God's care, thus repeating the devil's temptation of Jesus. Refusing to summon a doctor or to apply medicine would have much in common with this type of temptation.

Whether miraculous or by providence, the healing is still accomplished by God. If the healing is miraculous, it probably is a part of the spiritual gifts described in I Cor. 12:9 the gift of healing. As such, this gift would have vanished with the cessation of all the gifts described in I Cor. 12. Paul did say that these gifts would cease and be done away (I Cor. 13:8-9); and a more excellent way for guiding the church and motivating Christian action would be given (I Cor. 12:31; I Cor. 13.).

If the healing is by providence, the admonition is proper for the Christians today. Since the other instruction within the same section is applicable to all saints, this writer tends to prefer the interpretation that makes this calling for the prayers of the elders applicable today. The instruction, however, is seldom followed by most

churches. This results in most Christians failing to acknowledge God as the author of their healing, and failing to give Him thanks when this blessing is given. When this happens, the Christian misses so much in spiritual growth and nearness to God that it probably contributes much to the laxity and lack of spirituality in the churches today.

The sins forgiven are probably sins that contributed to the illness. The admonition could, no doubt, apply to any sins for which the sick person needed forgiveness. The forgiveness of sins is not an automatic result of the man's illness, but comes as a result of the intercessory prayer of the elders as well as the petition for forgiveness by the sick person. Such forgiveness conditioned upon the repentance of the sinning Christian, as is taught elsewhere in the scriptures.

If the one calling for the help of the elders turns out to be a sinning Christian, he should be encouraged to become conscious of his spiritual condition that he would be encouraged to confess his sins to God and seek forgiveness. This is probably meant as a condition upon which such a person would seek healing from *God* for his physical sickness.

## WHEN THE SAINTS SIN AGAINST ONE ANOTHER

### *Text*

- 5:16. Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working.
17. Elijah was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months.
18. And he prayed again; and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

### *Queries*

457. "Therefore" ties two things together. What two things in this instance?
468. What does the King James Version say instead of "sins" in verse sixteen?

469. Which version includes the most, the "sins" of the American Standard (above) or the word used in King James?
470. It is generally understood by many saints that confession of sins is made to God and confession of Christ is made to people. Generally speaking, what sins should be confessed to another person?
471. Since the elders were praying for the sick Christian who had sinned in verse 15; do you think the "another" in verse sixteen should be limited to the elders? Why so or why not?
472. In the light of the Roman Catholic view of confession to the priest, does this passage suggest that a church official (minister, priest, elder, etc) has the right to *forgive* these sins that are confessed to him?
473. What if the sins in question No. 472 were committed against the person who hears the confession of them; does he then possess the sole right to forgive them? (Remember what Jesus said on the cross about forgiving them (who crucified Him) and what Stephen said about who should forgive them (who stoned him).
474. What are *two* possibilities of the word "healed" in verse sixteen?
475. Because of the "therefore" in verse sixteen, the "healed" would probably refer to healing of what?
476. What does supplication mean? (Look it up if you do not know).
477. What is a "righteous man?"
478. Restate the meaning of the last sentence in verse sixteen; in the negative form; (i.e. in your statement, refer to an "unrighteous" man instead of a righteous man).
479. In the phrase "its working," just what is working, and who does the work?
480. Can you substitute another word for "passions" that might be clearer for our English today?
481. The original language in verse seventeen says "he prayed with prayer"; how could this be translated (correctly) "he prayed fervently"?
482. Look up the passage in I Kings 17:11. Did Elijah *in the Old Testament account* pray for rain?
483. Then how do you know he really did *pray* for rain?
484. How do you harmonize "three years and six months" with the

Old Testament reference to "in the third year" in I Kings 18:1?

485. How many times did Elijah pray before the servant saw a small cloud coming? (I Kings 18:20-45).
486. When the text says that Elijah was "like us", does this mean we can, with God's help, do miracles like Elijah? In what way then was he like us?
487. Since the "heaven" gave the rain, what did God have to do with it? (Can not God in the same way give us "healing" today?).

*Paraphrases*

- A. 5:16. Since God is ready to forgive your sins, then confess them to one another and also pray for each other that your sickness will be healed. The petitions of a righteous man avail so much they usually win out.
  17. Elijah was a natural man like us, and he prayed with intensity that it would not rain; and for three and a half years it didn't rain.
  18. After that he prayed for rain, and rain came from the sky, and growing things were green again.
- B. 5:16. Since it is true that God forgives you your sins, then confess to your brother your sins against him, and each of you pray for the other that your sins will be healed. God usually grants requests made through the prayers of sincere Christians.
  17. Elijah had the same kind of desires and troubles we do, and when he sought with prayer that it wouldn't rain, it didn't for three and a half years.
  18. Then when he prayed for rain, God gave it and the drought was broken.
- C.\*5:16. Admit your faults to one another and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous man has great power and wonderful results.
  17. Elijah was as perfectly human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for the next three and one half years!

18. Then he prayed again, this time that it would rain, and down it poured and the grass turned green and the gardens began to grow again.

### *Summary*

Since God forgives at the request of a righteous man we should confess our sins to each other. God heard Elijah's prayers, and He will hear ours.

### *Comment*

"Therefore" ties the previous thought with that which follows. Although the word is not in all the MSS, it does seem to be genuine and belongs in the text as given. The idea is that since God forgives at the prayer requests of saint, we should confess our sins to each other so that we would pray specifically and intelligently for one another.

The problem in the verse concerns what is healed in this instance. Since the subject of verse sixteen is primarily the forgiveness of sins, there is a distinct possibility that the healing of this verse is spiritual and concerns the Christians' soul, sick with sin. The "therefore" ties the entire thought of confessing, praying for, and forgiving of sins in verse sixteen with the fact mentioned in verse fifteen that God *does* forgive sins.

If this be the case, then we have one major thought in verse fifteen: God will heal the body of the sick Christian; and another thought in verse sixteen: God will heal the soul of the sinning Christian. The two thoughts are connected with the phrases: "and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him. Therefore. . ."

Another possibility which may in some ways seem even more plausible is that James is talking about one major problem in the entire section, verses thirteen to twenty. Those who hold to this view generally claim the central thought to be the healing of the body of the sick Christian. Singing, prayer, suffering, and sinning are all thus related to the central concern, the sick Christian.

To this writer the latter view seems to be an over-emphasis on the importance of sickness of body, there is a sickness that is more serious. Jesus did heal the body and forgive sins in the same instance, but His healing was at times stated to be for the purpose of showing

He had authority to forgive sins. Of the two, sin-sickness of soul is by far the more serious. When the information of this section (5:13-20) is carefully analyzed James has far more to say about sin than about physical sickness.

And now, supposing the main subject of verse sixteen to be sin, what kind of sin is to be confessed to the brother? All kinds? This could be, and if so it would call for a far greater amount of love, compassion, understanding, and earnest desire for the welfare of each other than many Christians show. The thought would then be that the Christian should not only confess his faults (King James) but all his sins. The idea is to unburden the general sinful trials on one another and join in prayers to God that these burdens will be lifted.

However, confession of sins one to another generally concerns a sin where one man has wronged another. Before a gift is acceptable to God, there must be a reconciliation with the brother (Matt. 5:24). When a brother has sinned against another, the two should discuss it between themselves (Matt. 18:15ff). A detailed confession of sins, on the other hand, is to be done before God. Nor is a church official, priest or elder, the mediator through which a Christian must go in order to confess to God.

So it would seem quite possible the sin confessed to the brother is the sin committed against the brother. This is the confession that must be made in order to restore harmony. Even as with God forgiveness is conditioned upon repentance, so in the commandments to forgive one another, repentance is implied. A brother who is penitent enough to confess his guilt touches the heart-strings of him who has the responsibility of forgiving. God requires confession and repentance for restitution of the Christian. (Acts 8:22; I John 1:7-9).

If we only knew what power there is available through prayer! God has a very sympathetic ear, and He is very reluctant to hold anything back which we as sincere Christians would request of Him. The supplication (entreaty) of a righteous man is like the earnest imploring of an obedient son to his father. The request "availeth much in its working," means the way that it is very powerful or mighty in bringing about the desired result. This is the literal meaning of the passage. A man after God's own heart has a great influence with God through his petitions.

This is true both with petitions for the healing of a sick brother

and for requests for compassion on a soul-sick brother that has wronged that one who is praying. Jesus prayed for those who had wronged Him even as He died at their hands. Stephen likewise asked for the compassion of God upon those who stoned him to death.

James' present subject, however, is that the petitions of God's loving sons really do have a tremendous influence with God. James illustrates this with the case of Elijah's prayers for drought. The Old Testament account does not actually say that Elijah prayed for the period in which it did not rain, but the thought in no way contradicts the account. The same Holy Spirit that inspired the writing of the Old Testament account also inspired the revealing of this additional information in James: it rained not for three and a half years because of Elijah's prayers.

Some, without thinking it through, might think that the period of three and a half years contradicts the passage in I Kings 18:1 which says that in the third year Elijah was told to go show himself to Ahab. The Old Testament does not say how much longer it was before the drought was broken. (It could have been six months!) Nor does the Old Testament account say from what time the three year period was measured. It could have been counted from some event that happened six months before the drought started. In other words, we could not know for certain how long the drought lasted if the Holy Spirit had not revealed it to us in the James passage, and in the account in Luke 4:25.

The account of Elijah's prayer for rain is told in detail in the Old Testament. In I King 18:20-45 we find that Elijah prayed seven times before the answer was visible. This is truly an example of a righteous man praying with prayer, or fervently praying. But it is the result that James wants the reader to notice. The drought was in effect because of the fervent request; and the rain came to break the drought for the same reason.

"But," one may ask, "do we have a right to pray for rain today?" Most certainly! This would especially be true if the rain were for a righteous purpose. And God would answer the prayer as He answered Elijah: through natural means. Some may call it "miraculous" because God actually sends the thing asked. If this is the definition of a miracle, then God performs miracles today as much as He ever did, for He continues to answer prayer. We might note that a cloud (in Elijah's case) came from the horizon and grew larger. Then when the heavens opened up, they *really* had a rain!



Strictly speaking, this is God working through providence (or through His normal way of working). Had there been no cloud in the sky with the sun shining sparkling and clear, and at the same time a tremendous rain was falling, this would have been God working through the miraculous (or through something other than His normal way of working). Although God sometimes answered prayers through miraculous means in the period when new revelations were being given through the prophets, we have no right to demand that God answer through His miracles today.

Since there are no new revelations being given (God's Word is complete and final), it is enough that He grants our petitions.

In the same way God will grant our requests for healing of the sick. Our petitions are heard and avail much with our heavenly Father. But we would have no right to demand that He must do the healing through miraculous means. There is no new revelation being given to be proved by the miracle. It is enough that He grants our requests and gives the healing. Is not this what we sought? (If we were really looking for a miracle rather than the healing, then our prayers were not honest!)

This brings us another thought; is it proper for a Christian to request something of God and remain passive, doing nothing to help, expecting that God will do it all? If God should give us our requests lying at our feet to be picked up, do we have the right to say: "God this is your doing and not mine. Therefore, I am not going to stoop over to pick up the blessing. You must place it in my hand so that I will know You did it!" How often we tempt God with this attitude! We ask God for healing, but at the same time demand that it must be a miracle; that God must do all of it; and that we shall do nothing. We fervently pray for healing, but refuse to wash the wounds with disinfectant (somehow claiming that God would not be doing the healing if we did). We ask God to heal the broken arm but will not see the doctor to have it set. Is this not tempting God even as the devil tempted Jesus to cast Himself down?

Our prayers for spiritual help and blessings are often no better. To pray that God would save a soul while we do nothing to bring it about, is insulting to God in that we are ignoring His revealed scheme of redemption. God has ordained to comfort others primarily through His saints. He desires to help others through making His children givers, even as He is a giver. His plan is that souls will be saved by the witness of His Word through those who already

know Him. The New Testament abounds with such phrases as "Ye are my witnesses," and "through the foolishness of that which is preached." In both parable and commandment we have the admonition to "go into all the world." If we could only realize the vanity of asking God for help but demanding that He not work His help through us, nor through natural means, nor through any means He has already chosen. And when He has already revealed His choice of working, it is for us to know and follow that revelation.

## WHEN THE SAINT ERRS FROM THE TRUTH

### *Text*

- 5:19. My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him;  
 20. let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.

### *Queries*

488. Who is specifically addressed in these two verses?  
 489. Is the person who errs from the truth a Christian, or non Christian? How do you know?  
 490. From what truth is this brother erring?  
 491. When he is converted, he is changed from what to what? (See verse 20 for a clue to the answer).  
 492. Is the expression "let him know" in v. 20 a commandment? If so, whom do we let know this truth?  
 493. The expression could also be second person plural, and as such would read "know ye" (indicative) or "we know" (imperative). Which reading makes the most sense in the context: "let him know" or "know ye?"  
 494. Who is the sinner in verse twenty? (Has he been mentioned before?)  
 495. What soul is saved from death?  
 496. Whose sins are covered? (Look carefully to see whose sins *need* covering).  
 497. From what kind of death is this soul saved?

498. Does this passage indicate anything about the value of a human soul?
499. Explain how a man who held to the "once in grace always in grace" doctrine might have difficulty with understanding this passage.
500. How many times in chapter five has James addressed his readers with the affectionate title of "brethren"?

*Paraphrases*

- A. 5:19. My dear brothers, if any of you have fallen in sin, and someone changes him back to his former life with Christ;
20. Let this someone know that anyone who leads a sinning Christian back to the Lord has saved that soul from death and has covered his many sins.
- B.\*5:19. Dear brothers, if anyone has slipped away from God and no longer trusts the Lord, and someone helps him understand the Truth again,
20. That person who brings him back to God will save a wandering soul from death and bring about the forgiveness of his many sins.

*Summary*

Brethren, if any of you sin then turn that one back to the Lord that his soul will be saved.

*Comment*

James here is referring to the sinning Christian. He is not speaking of someone who has sinned and has already repented. Nor is he speaking of someone who is sinning and has never been a Christian. He is speaking concerning the Christian who has erred from the truth and is now a sinner. If he is not converted, he is in danger of eternal death. His many sins are no longer covered by the blood of Christ because he has departed from Christ. His state is desperate for his soul is in as much danger as one who has never known the Lord Jesus.

The cause of this man's rejection of the blood of Christ is in-

licated by the expression "err from the truth." He has either deceived himself or has been deceived until now he no longer believes nor follows the plain teaching of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. He knows to do good, but is not doing it. He knows the teaching of Christ, but has departed from it. Not only has he departed in heart, but he has departed in deed. He needs to be converted from the "error of his way."

Some people believe that once a man is a Christian he can never again become in danger of eternal death. They claim that a Christian, though he may sin, cannot sin to the point of damnation. They believe God guarantees his repentance before death.

The doctrine is Calvinistic and contrary to the plain teaching of the New Testament. Hebrews 10:26 makes it clear that a Christian who continues to sin willfully is fallen from grace. In Hebrews 6:1-6 it is clear that while a former Christian remains in the state of sin he cannot be renewed to repentance. The warning is not an idle gesture about something that can never happen. Galatians 5:4 plainly states that Christians who put themselves back under the law system have fallen from grace. Paul warns of the danger of falling away in I Cor. 9:27. All of the epistles of the New Testament are filled with warnings to Christians that they can go back into the mire of sin and lose their souls.

With this fact in mind, the James 5:19-20 passage is very clear in meaning. One who was once a Christian may need conversion as desperately as any other man. When the saint errs from the truth, the brethren should be most concerned to convert him to save his soul from death. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." (Gal. 6:1).

The first phrase in verse twenty offers some difficulty in translation. The MMS do differ, but the "let him know" of our text is the best reading. The meaning would thus be: "If any of you Christians err from the truth, and one man converts him, let that man know that he who converts a sinner . . ." The Vatican MMS reading would be: "If any of you Christians err from the truth, and one converts him ye know that he who converts a sinner . . ."

In either case the intention is clear. James wishes to publicize the knowledge that a sinning Christian who is brought back to Christ is a soul saved from death. The death is eternal damnation, the second death of which the Bible warns. Most certainly re-

pentance would not save a man from dying the death of this life, else no sincere Christian would die.

The multitude of sins that are covered are the sins of the sinner. Some hold to a peculiar doctrine of doing good to others to cover their own sins, but to so interpret this verse would be a twisted application. James has made it quite clear that the fallen saint has erred from the truth and is a man of sin that needs converting. When he repents, it is the sinner who is saved from death, so quite properly it is the sinner's sins that are covered by this repentance.

### *EIGHT THREE-POINT SERMON STARTERS*

#### **WHEN THE SAINT SUFFERS 5:13a**

Let Him Pray:

1. To God who controls all.
2. Through Christ who suffered in all points as we.
3. For strength to bear it, if it need be.

#### **WHEN A CHRISTIAN IS MERRY 5:13b**

1. Let him express his joy.
2. Sing his praise unto God before men.
3. Refuse to sing words and tunes that promote sensuousness and non-Christian influences.

#### **ANOINTING WITH OIL 5:14**

1. Practiced when appointed one to office (O.T. examples).
2. An application upon the sick (Medicinal).
3. Done in the name of Jesus.

#### **ARE YOU SICK, BROTHER? 5:14-15**

1. Call the elders of the church  
(Doctor and medicine does nothing unless God consents).
2. Let them pray over him, anointing with oil.
3. God grants the healing; not the oil, nor the medicine, nor the doctor—"though these have their part."

#### **DIVINE HEALING 5:13-15**

1. The sick call for the elders. (No healing meeting).

2. God heals the sick. (In answer to prayer, through providence, to give more opportunity for service and/or repentance.
3. God forgives sins of the sick (When they meet the New Testament requirements for forgiveness).

**WHEN WE SIN ONE AGAINST ANOTHER 5:16**

1. Desire to change the matter.
2. Confess the fault to the person wronged.
3. Pray for one another's repentant life and forgiveness.

**WHEN THE CHRISTIAN ERRS 5:19-20**

1. Our duty is to teach and let all know what to do when a Christian sins.
2. A Christian's duty at the time one sins: to convert the sinner.
3. The sinner's duty is to repent from the error of his ways.

**A CHRISTIAN IN DANGER OF DEATH 5:19-20**

1. Cause: (a) To err from the truth; (b) To become a sinner.
2. Remedy: To convert the sinner.
3. Result: (a) A soul saved from death; (b) A multitude of sins covered.

## SPECIAL STUDY

### THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

I. B. Grubbs

#### *Fundamental Idea In Justification.*

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies; who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea, rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." Rom. 8 : 33, 34.

In the form of interrogation it is emphatically denied that any one can successfully bring a charge against the elect of God, can pronounce sentence of condemnation upon them, since it is God himself who justifies them on the ground that Christ by his death, his resurrection and intercession, secures their justification. To be justified, therefore, is to stand without accusation before God and thus be recognized and treated as righteous or just. In whatever conceivable way that state may be reached in which the voice of legal condemnation, which is the direct opposite of justification, cannot be heard, the result is justification in its fundamental import. He who, as an angel, could stand before God without accusation on the ground of sinless conformity to his law, would be justified or recognized as righteous on a ground vastly different from that on which one stands without charge as accepted in Christ and "through the redemption" provided in him. Accordingly there are two ways conceivable in which this righteousness may be sought. Only one of these is open to sinful or imperfect beings, while the other alone is applicable to the sinless or morally perfect. It has been many centuries since Job significantly asked, "How should man be just with God?" and all these intervening ages have not disclosed the possibility of his standing without accusation in the presence of his Maker on the ground of personal worth, inherent goodness, legalistic morality. On the contrary, "we know what the law saith it saith to those that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped and all the world be convicted of guilt before God. Therefore by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Rom. 3: 19, 20. If the discovery of sin thus precludes the possibility of legal justification, the only ground of this method of

appearing before God without accusation is absolute moral perfection, sinless conformity to all the requirements of God's moral law. Instead of extending the blessing of justification to the morally imperfect, the law thunders its curse in the dreadful sentence: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things that are written in the law to do them." Embodying thus its essence and its spirit in this discouraging formula, it offers no hope to the penitent ungodly, presents no prospect of peace with God to the awakened sinner. Hence says Paul of himself, "I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came sin lived and I died. For sin taking occasion by the commandment deceived me, and by it slew me." What a fatal mistake, then, for any human being to seek justification by the works of the law! For the law knows no works as a fulfillment of its high demands, save the elements of a life morally perfect. This was precisely the mistake of Paul's legalistic opponents as brought to view in Romans and Galatians, who, "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, had not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God."

## BEARINGS OF LEGAL JUSTIFICATION

The whole remedial system, the economy of the New Covenant, is at once set aside as an impertinence if man could appear before God without accusation on the ground of his personal goodness, the moral excellence of developed manhood. "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." Gal. 3: 21. And what then would logically follow? "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ has died in vain." Gal. 2:21. Hence the doctrine of the Jewish legalist, which is essentially that also of the modern Unitarian, Socinian and moralist, renders needless the death of Christ and "frustrates the grace of God." Is it any wonder that Paul should combat it with all the energy of his ardent nature? Never did any one believe more implicitly in the absolute necessity of our Savior's death for the redemption of mankind, and of our imperative need of the rich provisions of grace in him, than did this noble apostle. Hear his own sublime description of his deep and abiding trust in this sustaining source of his peace and joy: "I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the



## SPECIAL STUDY

flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." We see no leaning here upon spiritualized manhood, to say nothing of a suppositious merit of moral excellence or personal goodness. "Christ liveth in me," says this earnest apostle, but Christ as one "who loved me and gave himself for me." It is a crucified and risen Christ on which his faith lays hold, and not merely a beautiful life set before him for pious imitation. The formation of a Christ-like character is all important, but it can never constitute a meritorious ground of human hope. "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto the called, whether Jews or Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Christ, therefore, and Christ, not as the embodiment of moral beauty, but as an atoning sufferer and a risen Redeemer, was with Paul the sole "power of God" for the justification and eternal life of erring men.

Now there is no room for this "power of God" for man's salvation in the legal method of justification. It involves a complete repudiation of the Messiah and his redemptive work. For "if righteousness can come by the law, then Christ has died in vain." If man can be justified on the ground of legalistic morality and excellence of personal goodness, then all Messianic services and claims may with safety be ignored. It is thus perfectly clear that the erroneous theory of justification which Paul so vigorously and so successfully assailed was by no means superficial, but vitally touched the very foundations of the Christian religion and would overturn the whole remedial economy. It was not a mistake as to the mere conditionality of justification, but a radical error touching the very ground itself on which is made possible the justification of men. Instead of finding this ground in Christ it would lead us to seek for it in man himself. Under its baleful guidance men undertake "to establish their own righteousness" and thus utterly fail to "submit themselves unto the righteousness of God."

## THE METHOD OF FAITH

Over against the tremendously false system just described the apostle Paul sets forth in bold and striking contrast the true method of justification, the only possible way in which man can stand without accusation before God and thus be accepted and recognized as righteous. Hear him: "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be

justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God by faith unto all those who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified as a gift\* by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God: to declare at this time his righteousness that he might be just and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus." With great propriety, indeed, did Olshausen pronounce this wonderful passage "the citadel of the Christian faith." It sets forth the real ground, the only foundation of the spiritual hopes of humanity. It contains the apostle's positive and formal exposition of that "righteousness of God" which he had previously emphasized as the reason why the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes." How much is embraced in the believing here referred to remains as yet to be seen. We notice at present two important features in this "righteousness of God," which is asserted to be "unto all who believe," namely, the universality as to its offer of grace, and the conditionality as to its actual bestowment. The reason given why the offer is "unto all" is that "there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." In other words all stand in need of divine mercy as all are involved in the guilt of individual transgression. Hence the only way to justification is the one immediately pointed out by the apostle: "Being justified as a gift by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Thus justification comes "as a gift," and not as a debt due to moral and legalistic claims; it comes "by grace," and not by meritorious works of the law; it comes "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," and not through the moral excellence of man himself.

#### BEARINGS OF THIS METHOD

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. On what principle? of works? Nay, but on the principle of faith." If men must rely, not

\* The best rendering of *dorean*.

## SPECIAL STUDY

on their personal goodness, but on the grace of God in Christ, must trustingly look to the redemptive work of the Son of God as the sole ground of justification, all occasion for boasting is at once swept away in the expulsion of all spiritual pride and all sense of self-righteousness. This trusting reliance on "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" is the faith of which the apostle speaks as in contrast with the delusive dependence of legalistic moralists on their own supposed personal fitness for divine approbation. The faith method of justification, therefore, shows the ground of this blessing to be altogether objective, as "in Christ," and in no measure subjective, as in man himself. Faith itself, being an act or state of the human soul, cannot be regarded as entering into the ground of a righteous acceptance with God, but as belonging only to the conditionality of this blessing. That external acts of faith truly manifesting reliance on the grace of God in Christ, trustful acts in which men "submit themselves unto the righteousness of God," may likewise enter into the conditionality of gospel blessings and form elements of the faith method of justification, will be clearly shown hereafter. On this point we merely advert at present to the erroneous supposition of many that man's inner religious states possess a value in the sight of God quite superior to outward spiritual activity. The latter, indeed, is of necessity but a reflex of all that is found in the former. What we would now emphasize, however, is the thought that in neither of these departments of religious experience is the ground of justification to be sought, for our inner spiritual states are just as much ours, just as human in their nature, as our outward acts of real obedience.

No, it is not toward man at all, whether his inner or his outer religious life be considered, but to Jesus the Christ, that the eye must be directed when seeking the ground of our hope. Hence the important conclusion to which Paul was led (Rom. 8:1-2) by his own irresistible logic: "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." It is clear from the connection of the two verses that the freedom or deliverance here referred to, is not the internal or subjective deliverance from the dominion of sin, the importance of which in its own place cannot well be over-estimated, but the objective, judicial deliverance from "the curse of the law," deliverance from the legal "condemnation" to which all who are not "in Christ" stand constantly exposed. And the spiritual law of life, Hebraistically called "the

law of the Spirit of life," by which this deliverance is secured, and which is here located "in Christ" had previously been described by the apostle (3:24) as "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"—the redemptive source of life which is found alone in him. Now as the redemption which is in Christ is twice identified with the remission of sins (Eph. 1:7 and Col. 1:14) and as we are "justified by grace through the redemption which is in Christ," it is clear that justification of believers is through the forgiveness of sins. Hence Paul quotes David (Rom. 4:7, 8) as describing the blessing of justification in the following language: "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." To enter into Christ, therefore, is to become justified, and this through the remission of sins. How vastly different is this Pauline conception from the Augustinian conceit which has so largely influenced the Christian world, that justification by faith is an infusion of righteousness into the human soul by the power of "irresistible grace!"

## THE TWO METHODS IN CONTRAST

From the development of our subject thus far in the light of Paul's great argument, the utter impossibility of combining the method of justification which he combats with that which he upholds is perfectly obvious. The two stand over against each other in mutual exclusiveness; as thoroughly inharmonious and absolutely irreconcilable. As one cannot be sinless and sinful at the same time, morally perfect and yet ungodly; so one cannot be justified on legal grounds and yet through faith in Jesus Christ. Compliance with the laws of grace, with the precepts of the gospel, may stand connected with the gracious system of justification through Christ, but a justification on the basis of law, bringing a merited reward as due to moral or legal claims, excludes, of necessity, all dependence on Christ and the need of redemption through him. Nor can any blessing come to us as the gift of God, and yet be the payment of a debt due to meritorious service or deserving works. A mere glance at the following tabular view of striking antitheses, brought out in Paul's discussion of this subject, will show us the perfect contrast between the two systems, while a thoughtful and patient study of all the antithetical points presented will bring to light and expose the many mistakes made by disputants in their applications of the apostle's expressions and

## SPECIAL STUDY

sentiments. As the argument is found mainly in the epistle to the Romans, reference to that book will be indicated only by chapter and verse, while reference to other epistles will be fully made:

### JUSTIFICATION

By Works of Law	<i>versus</i>	By Faith in Christ,
is		is
1. Meritorious (4:4)	"	1. Gratuitous (3:24)
as of		as of
2. The sinless (Gal. 3:10)	"	2. The sinful (4:5).
Hence is		Hence is
1. Without pardon (3:20),	"	1. Through pardon (4:6-8).
2. Without grace (4:4),	"	2. By grace (3:24).
3. Without Christ (Gal. 3:21),	"	3. Through Christ (3:24).
4. Without faith (4:14),	"	4. By faith (3:28).
5. Without the obedience of faith (4:14),	"	5. Through the obedience of faith (4:12).
Resulting in		Resulting in
1. Occasion for boasting (4:2),	"	1. Exclusion of boasting (3:27).
2. Reward as a debt (4:4),	"	2. Reward as a gift (Eph. 2:8).

With the eye resting upon this collection of antitheses, by which the true nature and comprehensiveness of the gospel system of justification can be clearly seen in the thorough contrast with the opposite scheme, we may easily detect and render apparent the erroneous conceptions to which allusion has been made. It will be seen at once that it is not by the acquisition of power through the gospel to reach perfection of personal holiness, and thus satisfy the demands of the divine law as "holy, just and good" that we are justified by faith. He who imagines that through the aids of grace he has reached this state, may find himself rebuked by the apostle John in the following passage: "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." We may not hope to attain personal perfection under the gospel any more than under the law. And if this could be done, and should be the basis on which men are justified, it would appear at last that the ground of justification is not "in Christ" but in he believer himself. How very far, therefore, from the true conception of justification by faith are the following statements of Olshausen, who represents herein quite a large class of theologians:

"That which is new in the gospel does not consist in a more excellent system of morality, but in this, that the gospel opens a

new source of strength by means of which true morality is attainable." No, that which is new in the gospel is neither "a more excellent system of morality," nor yet the opening of a "new source of strength" for attaining "true morality," but "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" for the cancellation of transgressions and sins. Once more from Olshausen: "The realization of absolute perfection is the highest end of man's existence; the law could not effect this any further than the bringing forth of an outward legality, but by regeneration an inward condition is through grace, produced in believers, 'the righteousness of God,' which answers the highest requirements." "That work which was objectively accomplished on the cross, is thus subjectively applied to the individual believer, that germ of the new man which exists in Christ is grafted into and born in the old man. This act of transfer is, therefore, a mysterious occurrence in the depths of the soul, a new creation, which none can effect by his own powers, a pure gift of the Spirit who breatheth where he listeth."

How utterly foreign all this is to the conception of Paul is perfectly obvious from the tabular view presented above. He never dreamed of resolving justification by faith into "a mysterious occurrence in the depths of the soul," grounded on "an inward condition produced in believers through grace" and consisting of an incomprehensible "transfer" of a moral or spiritual "germ" from Christ to the believer for an impossible "realization of absolute perfection!" How different the language and the ideas of the apostle, "Being justified as a gift by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Yes, in Christ himself "in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

With equal clearness our tabulated antithetical points, as gathered from the apostle's grand argument on justification evince the folly of representing any act of obedience springing from faith in Christ as belonging to the legalistic system. Nothing but sheer thoughtlessness or inexcusable ignorance touching the simple elements of the subject so clearly developed by the apostle, could lead to such an error. Grace has its laws to be obeyed, the gospel requires submission to its commandments, yet these are not only compatible with faith in Christ Jesus, but manifest, indeed, the believer's confiding trust in him; whereas, "if they who are of the law be heirs, faith is made void and the promise of no effect." The law-system and the faith-system cannot be made to mingle their elements. In the thorough-

## SPECIAL STUDY

ness of the absolute and inextinguishable contrast between them, their irreconcilable antagonism appears. It is not possible for God himself to justify any one without pardon, without grace, without Christ, without faith in Christ, without "the obedience of faith," and at the same time justify him through pardon, by grace, through Christ, by faith, through "the obedience of faith." And here let it be carefully noted, that in the great epistle whose object is to prove that man is "justified by faith apart from the works of the law" the apostle twice emphasizes the importance of the "obedience of faith" as the object of the gospel, for which there can be no room whatever in any system that makes faith itself void. Hear him in the following beautiful passage with which he concludes the epistle: "Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gosepl, and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but is now made manifest and by the Scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith; to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever."

Now that this "obedience of faith," this obedient surrender to the requirements of the gospel as springing from faith in Jesus Christ, was contemplated by the apostle as entering into the faith-method of justification, is evident from his statement in Rom. 4:9-12: "We say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while in uncircumcision, that he might be the father of those who believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be reckoned to them also: and the father of the circumcised in the case of those who are not only of the circumcision, but also walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham, while in uncircumcision." Paul therefore teaches that the blessing of justification comes upon those who walk by faith in a loving, trustful submission to the divine will, after the example of Abraham. For what saith the Scripture? "Abraham, Abraham, lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything to him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. . . By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thy only son,

that in blessing I will bless thee and in multiplying I will multiply thee as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice." So, also: By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." And so likewise, "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying upon (*epi*) his gifts."

And thus we see that a blessing which is conditioned on the obedience which springs from faith is Scripturally represented as conditioned on faith itself, and this from the necessity of the case, for whatever is suspended on an outward manifestation of faith, is thereby suspended on the faith thus manifested. And why should not faith in the form of visible action into which it carries its spiritual qualities, whatever they may be, faith as bodying forth the believer's implicit trust in the saving mercy of God, and, by consequence a complete renunciation of all self-righteousness, be, at least, of equal value with itself, as a principle hidden in the depths of the soul? Why should the inner sense of dependence on God be in his sight of more value than the impressive embodiment of this reliance on him, in a practical submission to his will? Behold that flower in the bud! What is it? A rose. See it now again, it is full-blown. What is it now? A rose still; nay, rather a rose in its perfection. Even so, faith, when budding in the heart, is surely faith; and when blossoming in the life, and bringing forth the fruit of obedience to Jesus, is it not faith still? Yes, as James would assure us, it is "faith made perfect" in its fruitful manifestations.

In the further development of this interesting and important part of the subject, the writer may perhaps be excused for transcribing what he has elsewhere said, with as great clearness as he could now possibly exhibit. I quote as follows:

The spiritual value of faith itself, be this what it may, attaches of necessity, to all actions springing from faith. The stream is, in quality, as the fountain whence it issues; the branches, leaves and fruit, as the tree on which they grow. Paul was never so unwise as to suppose any incompatibility between faith and what he calls "the obedience of faith." For in every act produced by faith in Christ, the believer is really looking to him and reposing upon him as the ground



## SPECIAL STUDY

of all hope and the source of all life. It is in this and this only, that either faith or "the obedience of faith" has any real worth as constantly fixing the eye of the soul upon Jesus. But he who relies on legalistic morality for justification looks not toward Calvary, but in another direction, and thus practically repudiates Christ himself, and, of course, all personal need of faith and of grace. Hence, the apostle says: "If they who are of the law be heirs, faith is made void and the promise of no effect." Not so, however, does he reason respecting obedience to Christ as springing from faith in him. He who "in obeying the truth" is leaning on Jesus for blessing, does not declare faith needless, nor turn away from its great object, but rather from every system of self-righteousness and delusive reliance on human goodness.

So thought Paul, or he would not have represented in this argument righteousness as imputed to those "who walk in the steps of that faith which Abraham had while in uncircumcision." While, therefore, neither faith nor deeds of faith can constitute the ground of justification, any more than legal works, yet the blessing of God may be conditioned as much on obedient acts produced by faith as on the act of believing itself without any detriment whatever to the remedial system. The public confession of Christ's name (Matt. 10:32) and "the baptism of repentance for remission of sins" (Mark 1:4; Acts 2:38 and 22:16) are not legalistic pretensions to merit but simple elements of the economy of grace divinely approved. Surely, the need of forgiveness is the need of grace, and he who seeks it by being "baptized into Christ" (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27) is not looking to himself, but to Jesus, not "going about to establish his own righteousness," but looking for salvation on the feasible condition of trust in his Redeemer.

## PAUL AND JAMES

In the light of the thorough-going contrast between legal justification and justification by faith, as exhibited in our tabular view of the antitheses involved in Paul's discussion of this subject, we may not only see the perfect harmony of this apostle's teaching with that of James, but are prepared to rightly estimate the following statement of Baur who, with the dogmatic confidence characteristic of German critics, asserts an irreconcilable discrepancy between the two apostles:

"The main doctrinal position of the epistle of James, 'By works a man is justified and not by faith only,' 2:14, is the direct opposite of the Pauline doctrine as it is stated in Rom. 3:28, in the proposition, 'a man is justified by faith apart from works of law.' It cannot be denied that between these two doctrines there exists an essential difference, a direct contradiction. It may be urged that James says no more than 'not by faith only,' that he refers justification not exclusively to works, but partly, at least, to faith also. But the Pauline proposition, on the other hand, distinctly excludes works and refers justification to that very faith of which James says that without works it is nothing, forms no element of the religious life at all. Those works, then, which Paul altogether repudiates, are with James the ground of justification; and that faith which with James has no religious value whatever apart from works, is with Paul the principle of justification."

Now, nothing but an inexcusable disregard of what each apostle has said as descriptive of the "works" of which he speaks, can account for the grossly false assertion that "those works which Paul altogether repudiates are with James the ground of justification!" And we do not wonder that a critic who is capable of such misrepresentation should dogmatically declare on the basis of his own perversion of apostolic teaching, that "it cannot be denied that between these two doctrines there exists an essential difference, a direct contradiction!" What he here positively says "cannot be denied," cannot only be denied but demonstrably shown to be false. What does Paul say of the works which he repudiates, while showing that by legal works shall no one be justified? Listen: "If they who are of the law be heirs, *faith is made void* and the promise of no effect." What does James say of the works which he inculcates while contending that "a man is justified by works and not by faith only?" Listen: "Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac, his son, upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was *faith made perfect*." Whenever, therefore, it can be shown that the works by which "faith is made void," are identical with those by which "faith is made perfect," then, and not till then, can an apology be found for Baur's reckless statement that "those works which Paul altogether repudiates, are with James the ground of justification." The apostle James never dreamed of legal works as constituting "the ground of justification" which would "frustrate the grace of God" and render abortive the death of

## SPECIAL STUDY

his Son. Gal. 2:21. And the apostle Paul never claimed justification for one who believes apart from "the work of faith," but for such as would "walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham." Rom. 4:12. When James said: "He that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing," he had in view a system in which there is no room whatever for legal works as "the ground of justification," with its impossible requisite of sinless perfection in the personal excellence of the justified. And when Paul repudiated the legal basis of justification, he had in mind a system in which there is no room whatever for faith in Christ or obedience to him, or for Christ himself, as any ground of our hope! It is thus as clear as sunlight that "those works which Paul altogether repudiates," and the works which James demands belong respectively to two incompatible systems whose elements cannot by any means be associated.

But Baur, whose attention was directed by certain observations of Neander to the kind of works referred to by James as actions connected with faith, endeavors to justify his criticism as follows: "If we are to regard these remarks as actually shedding light on the subject, the chief point in them must be this, that the works of James are different from those of Paul, that he means such works as proceed from faith, and are the fruits of faith." Exactly so. James does mean just "such works as proceed from faith and are the fruits of faith." "But Paul does not distinguish two kinds of works," continues Baur, "he says broadly that it is impossible to be justified by them. This must apply to those that proceed from faith as well as others; for if they proceed from faith then faith is there already, and with faith justification; so that they cannot have been the means of justification. Kern was thus perfectly justified in asserting that the difference between Paul and James is one of principle and cannot be got rid of."

This only shows how far this critic falls short of grasping the true import of Paul's argument on justification. The apostle does distinguish two kinds of works which differ from each other so radically that they cannot belong to the same system—differ, indeed, so essentially as to mutually exclude each other. He so describes the works which he repudiates as to distinguish them from the whole economy of faith, from the entire system of grace, and, by consequence, from all working required by this system. If it be true, as

the apostle teaches, that "faith is made void" through justification by the works which he repudiates, then, of necessity, is the "work of faith" for which he commends the Thessalonians equally made void by that method, and for that very reason, among others, he uncompromisingly opposes the legalistic system. Thus the "work of faith" is not only distinguished by him from works of law, but shown to be so radically different that they cannot co-exist, cannot possibly enter into the same method of justification. As by the legal system faith in Christ is absolutely set aside, it follows that all religious action springing from faith in him, is thereby also excluded. There may be, and there must be an observance of God's moral law as to the main tenor of life in order even to justification by faith through grace, for grace will not bestow justification upon those who persist in immorality. Yet this relative keeping of the law, which is both positive and imperative, can only be regarded as a condition and by no means as the ground of our justification. Were the law itself to justify, it could only do so, not on the condition of a mere relative observance of its requirement, but on the ground of a faultless fulfillment. Its maxim is, "Cursed is every one that continues not in all the things that are written in the book of the law to do them." Such a keeping of the divine law, were it possible to man, would truly be the ground, and not a mere condition of justification, and as such would, as we have seen, "frustrate the grace of God," and render needless "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

Clearly, then, when James asserts that "a man is justified by works and not by faith only," he is not to be construed as insisting that any works, even those that spring from faith, can be regarded as the meritorious ground of justification, but merely that this blessing is graciously conditioned on the "work of faith" as well as on faith itself, on the former, indeed, as the manifestation of faith's perfection. And when Paul insists that "by faith a man is justified apart from works of law," he makes no opposition to "the obedience of faith," which he regards as belonging to the gracious system of justification, since he holds that in order to receive this blessing one must "walk in the steps of the faith which Abraham had." With neither apostle does either faith or the "work of faith" enter into the ground of justification, while with each of them, both faith and the "work of faith" stand on an equal footing as the gracious condition of this blessing. Neither of them ascribes to faith a virtue or effi-

## SPECIAL STUDY

cacy which is denied to "the obedience of faith." There is no ground whatever in the teaching of either for the following position of Baur: "When James puts justification by works in the place of Pauline justification by faith, he ascribes to works that absolute value which faith has with Paul. The reason why Paul denied justification to works was that there was nothing absolute about them, and that they could only stand in an inadequate relation to justification. Now, what does James do but vindicate for works that absolute character which, according to Paul, they cannot possibly have? They could not have this absolute character except in virtue of their unity with faith, and thus the absoluteness of works would not belong to works, but to faith."

Now to suppose that Paul conditioned justification on faith and denied it to works because of an alleged "absolute value" possessed by the former and not by the latter, and to say that James sought to "vindicate for works that absolute character which, according to Paul, they cannot possibly have," is to show again an utter failure to enter into the meaning of either apostle. Has any one ever been able to show that the act of believing possesses an "absolute value" that does not belong to other human acts? Can faith sustain "an adequate relation to justification" any more than those acts of obedience which are produced by faith and by which, as James informs us, faith itself is "made perfect?" It is this very conceit of a special virtue or efficacy inherent in faith itself and supposed to be foreign to the practical manifestations of faith that has beclouded this whole subject in the speculations of men. No, "the reason why Paul denied justification to works" and insisted on a coming to Christ through faith was not because of any "absolute value" either in this faith in Christ or this coming to him, but because of man's imperfection and the consequent impossibility of his justification on a legal basis which demands nothing less than absolute moral perfection. He must come to Christ for the redemption that is in him, and not rely on any supposed "absolute value" in any act of his own, whether inward or outward. Can any one find perfection in our inner religious states any more than in our external acts of obedience? Faith is emphasized by the Scriptures, not because of standing in opposition to outward religious action, but because it leads through submission "to the righteousness of God" to the only fountain of salvation for men. And neither with James nor with any other sacred writer are "those works which Paul altogether repudiates," nor any other works

## JAMES

whatever, "the ground of justification." Christ and Christ only is that ground, and all that we can do in believing on his name and in submitting to his will is but the gracious condition of our acceptance.

Let us conclude with devout and profound thanksgiving that beings so sinful and weak as we are can find a way through "the exceeding riches of grace" in Christ Jesus to stand without accusation in the presence of God.

## —THE EPISTLE OF JUDE—

### CANONICITY

For centuries the place of Jude in the canon of scriptures has been secure. Its genuineness and authenticity are universally endorsed; but the epistle has not always been universally received. One of the main objections in centuries past has been the reference in verse 9 to the contention of Michael the archangel with the devil about the body of Moses. It is claimed that Jude copied this from the uninspired "Assumption of Moses" (A.D. 44, ISBE, page 1768), or from the apocryphal "Book of Enoch." The reference to Michael the archangel is not necessarily anti-scriptural, however. (Note: I Thess. 4:16; Daniel 12:1; and Revelation 12:7). The difficulty is that no Old Testament scripture is found that refers to the dispute about the body of Moses. Thus it is assumed that (1) the original reference is lost, or (2) the meaning is figurative (a rather naive approach to the problem), or that (3) the passage itself, or the book, should be disputed as authoritative, or that (4) Jude, by the leading of the Holy Spirit, quoted a portion of oral tradition that was true, as was evident by the fact that the Holy Spirit permitted its usage.

### REASON FOR QUOTE FROM A HEATHEN SOURCE

The fact of the possible quotation from a heathen source should not compel us to accept the writing as uninspired. If this were so, then the writings of Paul would present the same difficulty because of such passages as Acts 17:28; I Cor. 15:33; and Titus 1:12. A similar problem may also be noted in Acts 20:35; 2 Tim. 3:8; Acts 7:22; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 11:35, 37; etc.

To prove a point of what man finds *acceptable*, and of man's *recognition* of a basic truth, it would be quite proper to quote a current tradition, even if that tradition were itself baseless in truth. The fact that man generally accepts a certain tradition shows that man finds the points of the tradition plausible. The Jude passage, however, seems to more definitely quote from some inspired source; or at least some feel the reference to the book of Enoch (v. 14) so indicates. If verse 9 refers to some inspired writing, then we do not have that writing. If it refers to a then current tradition (which is

## JUDE

possible) the point is still clear that man should recognize God's right to approve or disapprove, as stated in verse 5.

### RELATION BETWEEN JUDE AND SECOND PETER

Commentaries through the centuries have expressed much concern about the relationship between Jude and II Peter. There is a distinct similarity seen in at least twelve verses. In some instances this similarity appears almost verbatim. Charges concerning the relationship between these two epistles have even gone so far as to include plagiarism. Which one "copied" from the other? Which author "worked over" the writings of the other?

The inspired writings of the scripture have a supernatural relationship that is not found in secular writings. Inspiration of the Holy Spirit gives each book of the Bible a common source and a common planner. The fact that the sixty six books of the Bible make one book is no accident; nor it is a case of each successive writer studying the former writings that he might of his own logic build a theology thereon. The plan for the revelation was in the mind of God from the beginning, and the Holy Spirit caused the prophets to give God's revelation progressively according to His own plan.

Thus quotations and imitations of the different writers in the planned revelation of God are not to be judged on the same basis as the writings of uninspired authors. There is even a certain affinity and agreement of interpretation among those sincere students who would give diligence to divide aright the Word of God. The Bible is not of private interpretation, and the intended meaning in nearly all cases can be clearly and accurately determined if one studies with this intention.

No intention of concealment was present with the sacred writers. No claim of originality was made, for the Holy Spirit was the common inspiration and Revealer that prompted the writing. It is no fault if the same biblical expression is used in more than one place or by more than one earthly writer. Nor is any blame involved if one writer found the revealed truth so adequately expressed by a former writer that he preferred (at the Spirit's approval) to use the former writing verbatim.

The general consensus about who wrote first seems to be that II Peter was the earlier writing. The false teachers predicted by



## INTRODUCTION

Peter seem to have already appeared on the scene at the time of Jude's writing. The verses that show a distinct similarity follow:

Jude v.4	II Peter 2:1-3
Jude v.6	II Peter 2:4
Jude v.7-10	II Peter 2:6-12
Jude v.11	II Peter 2:15
Jude v.12, 13	II Peter 2:13-17
Jude v.16	II Peter 2:18
Jude v.17-18	II Peter 3:1-3

## THE PREVAILING APOSTASY IN THE EARLY CHURCH

The prevailing problem in the church at the time Jude wrote the epistle was apostasy. Several of the epistles were written to combat a particular type of apostasy that was becoming more prevalent at the time. This apostasy later became known as Gnosticism. Several of Paul's epistles possibly make reference to this heresy. I John; II Peter and Jude make an especially strong attack against Gnosticism—with perhaps the strongest language being used in the epistle of Jude.

Gnosticism was a mixture of oriental and Greek Philosophies with Christian teaching. It really amounted to a perversion of the Christian system. The purpose seemed to be to make a philosophical system out of the teaching of Christianity. The perversion was evident at the time Jude wrote his epistle, but it steadily increased in strength until it reached a peak that seemed to almost destroy the Church in the second century.

In order to make the Christian approach really philosophical, the question, "what must I do to be saved from sin?" was changed to "What is the origin of evil?" Evil was identified with material existence. Anything involving matter was inherently evil, this included not only the rocks and the trees of this earth, but also the flesh of both animal and man; thus man lived in an evil world within an evil body. He was completely helpless. What he did in the flesh made no difference for flesh was evil. Some Gnostics became ascetic, torturing and punishing their bodies. Other Gnostics were indulgent, revelling in the most vile practices. Since the flesh was evil it really made no difference what one did with it. Against this background, John, in the first Epistle of John, strongly declares it *does* make a difference how man acts.

## JUDE

Another common teaching of the Gnostic group was that flesh was so evil that God—even a lower God like Jehovah—could not possibly occupy the flesh. They claimed that God only *appeared* to occupy flesh. A great number of them claimed that God was not incarnate in flesh, but He only came to work in the flesh of the man Jesus for a short period of time during his life. It was a common teaching among the Gnostics that Christ came to be with the man Jesus at his baptism, then the Christ departed from the man Jesus before he was crucified. Birth and death were so closely connected to the evil nature of the flesh that God could never consent to go through these processes.

The word Gnostic means "knowledge." One became a member of the Gnostic group by a special rite, or initiation. To be a member of this group meant that he would have a secret insight to knowledge that surpassed the knowledge of the Old Testament prophets. These "Christian" Gnostics were the Christians who were "in the know."

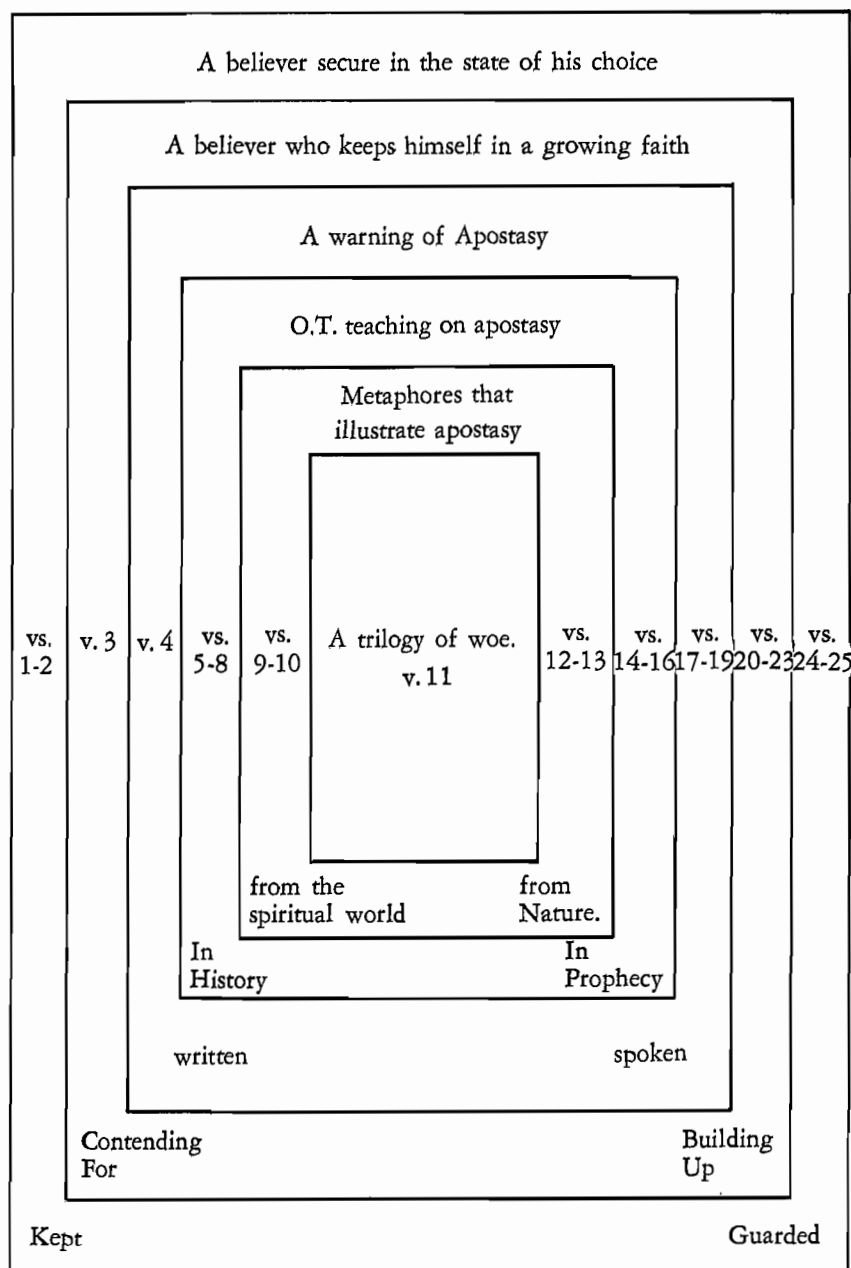
The Gnostics viewed the world of people as being divided into three groups. The first and largest group by far were the 'Hylics'. A Hylic was hopelessly subject to matter and completely lost in his involvement with human flesh. The second class of people were those who were "psychic"—these were the ones who had faith in the nearest God (Jehovah) but were limited by their faith to knowing only one "lesser" God. The third group was composed of a select few who had "Gnosis." This group had the private access to truth, they knew that the ultimate God was far above Jehovah and could never have anything to do with the flesh and this earth.

### AN OUTLINE

With the roots of this apostasy already busy in the church Jude writes to warn the brethren. His style is like a gem. In five steps he leads the Christian from his security in Christ Jesus to the horrible state of woe because of this apostasy. The very heart of the epistle is a "trilogy of woe" found in verse 11. Then Jude leaves the state of apostasy and takes the believer back out through the same five steps to his security in Christ Jesus.

The epistle could probably best be outlined by drawing these five steps as a series, with the 'trilogy of woe' being the center. A diagram follows:—

# JUDE



—ON APOSTASY

INTRODUCTION AND SALUTATION: A BELIEVER KEPT  
SECURELY IN THE STATE OF HIS CHOICE

*Text*

1. Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James to them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ:
2. Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied.

*Queries*

1. Who is the stated author of the epistle?
2. What relationship with Jesus is stated?
3. Does this relationship make it impossible that he could also be the physical brother of Jesus?
4. What is the stated relationship with James?
5. Since the James is not further identified, to which James is the reference likely?
6. What are the three ways in which Jude identifies his readers as Christians?
7. What does 'kept' mean?
8. In what way is God the author of our safety?
9. Since he is writing to those who are 'kept' does this indicate that some who started correctly have not been preserved?
10. For whom does God call?
11. Since the persons addressed are obviously the Christians, in what sense does the term 'called' refer only to Christians?
12. Why does a Christian, who already is preserved in Jesus Christ, need mercy?
13. Why is 'peace' a real need among Christians?
14. "Be multiplied" refers to what quantity of increase?

*Paraphrases*

- A. 1. Jude, who with his brother James is a bondservant of Jesus Christ; to the Christians who have responded to the call and love of God the Father, and who have been preserved for the cause of Jesus Christ;

2. may God's mercy, His peace, and His love be added again and again unto you.
- B.\*1. From: Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and a brother of James.  
To: Christians everywhere, for God the Father has chosen you and kept you for Jesus Christ.
2. May you be given more and more of God's kindness, peace and love.

### *Summary*

Jude identifies himself as a brother of the well-known James and as a servant of Jesus. He then addresses the Christians with a wish for mercy, peace and love.

### *Comment*

There is some question as to which Jude actually wrote the book. The five Judes of the New Testament include (1) The Judas of Damascus (Acts 9:11). Lack of further mention of this Jude eliminates him as a likely author of the epistle. (2) Judas Barsabas was mentioned in Acts 15 (v.22,27,32). This Judas accompanies Silas on a trip to Antioch from Jerusalem, and he was also called a prophet (Acts 15:32), but he has never been seriously considered as a likely author of the book of Jude. (3) Then there was Judas Iscariot who was not alive at the time the book was written. This leaves two men by the name of Jude who might have possibly been the author: (4) The Apostle Judas "not Iscariot" (John 14:22). This apostle is called the "brother of James" in the Authorised Version, and as such would look like a likely author of the book. However, in this passage the word "brother" has been added, for it was not contained in the original Greek. (All words printed in italics in the Authorised Version are not in the original Greek). Judas of James in the Greek more likely means "Judas, son of James." The later translations so read. Thus the apostle Judas is probably not the author of the book. Had he been, he probably would have mentioned his apostleship in the first verse rather than identifying himself as being the brother of James. (5) The most likely author is the fifth Judas, the brother of Jesus mentioned in Matt. 13:55 and Mark 6:3. James the author of the epistle James, is identified as the brother of Jesus. It is quite probable that another brother of Jesus, Jude, wrote the Jude epistle. Had he been an apostle, his apostleship would have

been a sure mark of identification, but this he does not mention.

You might ask, "If Jude, the brother of Jesus, wrote the epistle, why didn't he mention that he was Jesus' brother as a mark of identifying himself?" Jude no doubt felt his relationship to Jesus as a Lord and servant relationship to be far more important. In humility and for the sake of proper testimony it seems natural he would prefer to call himself a servant of his Lord (which he was). James was so well known that this identification seemed to be sufficient. For this reason the James who was his brother must have been the well-known James who was the Lord's brother and who wrote the epistle of James.

Most commentators agree that the epistle was written at a late date, some even giving a date far after the destruction of Jerusalem. The beginning of Gnosticism was evident when the epistle was written. It also appears Jude was familiar with the passages in 2 Peter 1:5 and 2:1-18, for he finds their expression so well suited to his purpose that he uses them with slight modification. (Jude 3-18.) Some argue that perhaps Peter was familiar with Jude when he wrote his epistle. This is, of course, another possibility. No exact date can be given, but if Jude was familiar with Peter's writing and he wrote before the siege of Jerusalem, then the date would probably be between A.D. 65 and 70. Nothing is known concerning the place of writing.

Jude identifies his readers three ways; the called, beloved, and kept. Although many Christians often argue as to the way in which God calls, the scripture is quite clear that the call of God is given for every man and is given through the gospel. (II Thess. 2:13-14). This gives added meaning to the urgency of carrying the "good news" to every man; and seeing that the gospel is preached in every season and in every nation. The word for "called" is used for summoning a man to a responsibility or to a feast or festival, or to a court and judgment. All three senses have some significance here, but it seems the responsibility as being a member of God's army and the feast at the Word of God has added significance to the Christian. The call to a court judgment would have significance to everyone, but especially to the non-Christian.

"Beloved" is a term that grips the very soul of man. This is not only the nature of the call, but the nature of the caller and the nature of the one who responds to the call. In love is the real motive for response as well as the real motive for offering the way of

escape (the scheme of redemption) for man. Man responds (becomes beloved in his own nature through regeneration) because he is beloved of God.

The power of God to "keep" the Christian from all adversaries and guard him from all his enemies is emphasized at the beginning and the end of the epistle. The apostasy described and warned against will certainly make life miserable for the saint, but this misery is nothing when compared to the glory that shall follow. God's ability to keep His saints in their chosen state of redemption is without contest. As long as the individual saint chooses to remain in that group which God has pre-planned and predestined to be saved, he will be kept (Jude 1) and guarded (Jude 24) by God. Of course, the individual is free to leave this guarded group if he should choose, for God has not taken his will from him. The book of Jude becomes more than a strong statement of woe against the apostate, it becomes a warning to the saint not to choose the road of apostasy.

The determination and power of God to keep those who continue to choose to remain with Him is nowhere more clearly set forth than in the book of Romans. "If God is for us, who is against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Even as it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:31-39.

Jude's starting point for his discussion on apostasy is beautiful indeed, although briefly stated. The majestic grandeur of being kept for Jesus Christ culminates in Jude's prayer for multiplied mercy, peace and love for his readers. Mercy is the sympathetic good performed on our behalf, then tranquility of soul is ours because this

good (salvation) has been performed. His love is multiplied as we become like He is . . . altogether lovely.

In this section we already see a pattern of expression that Jude uses in a beautiful way: the triad. Three triads are used in these two verses: (1) Jude, servant, brother; (2) sanctified, preserved, called; (3) mercy, love, peace. More than a dozen such triplets are used in the epistle.

*A BELIEVER WHO KEEPS HIMSELF BY CONTENDING  
FOR A GROWING FAITH*

Jude 3

*Text*

3. Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.

*Queries*

1. How many other times does Jude use the word "beloved" in this letter?
2. In the use of the word "beloved," who does the loving?
3. If it had not been for this apostasy, would Jude have written to them anyway? What makes you think so in this verse?
4. What does the text mean when it refers to our salvation as the "common" salvation?
5. What, in Jude 3, indicates that Jude changed his mind about the subject of his letter?
6. What within the verse indicates the new problem is the apostasy?
7. Put the expression "once for all delivered" into your own words.
8. Who are the "saints?"

*Paraphrases*

- A. 3. Dear loved ones, I was just ready to write you about the salvation we all share together in Christ when I was moved to change my mind. Now it is imperative that I urge you to fight for the faith in such a way as to defend and retain



it; as no other faith will be given to God's children, for there is no other.

B.\*3. Dearly loved friends, I have been planning to write you some thoughts about the salvation God has given us, but now I find I must write of something else instead, urging you to stoutly defend the truth which God gave, once for all, to His people to keep without change through the years.

### *Summary*

Jude changes his mind about the subject-matter of his letter. Instead of a general letter about salvation, apostasy within the church causes him to urge them to be faithful to the revelation they have received from God.

### *Comment*

Jude dearly loves the saints to whom he writes. The term "beloved" could refer to Jude's love. However there is something complete in the expression that implies beloved by God. It would be difficult to say the term refers either to the love of God or the love of Jude exclusive to the other. They were beloved by both.

Jude was either ready to write to them, or else he had already begun his writing. He was in earnest in the process of planning, or of execution. Perhaps he was just on the point of writing about the need of salvation that all Christians share in common. Such a subject would have been worthy of a letter. One of the most profound books of the New Testament (Romans) is on this subject. But something happened to change Jude's mind before the letter could be written.

It may be that fresh news had reached Jude about the apostates within the church, or that recent developments became such that Jude became suddenly alarmed. However he heard the news, he found it necessary (needful) to change his mind and exhort them about the impending danger. Their faith was in danger of being altered or spoiled. Their convictions about the person and divinity of Jesus was to be attacked. Perhaps the attack had already begun!

Note the method of defense used by Jude. Knowledge was the only defense. They were to know first of all what they believed, and why. Their best defense was to contend earnestly *for* what they believed. In order to firmly implant themselves in this positive stand, they

must restudy the revelation already given. They already had the "good news" concerning Christ. The Gospel revelation had been completed and was delivered for all time to come. There would be no contrary revelation. This had been "once for all delivered."

So brethren, know all about your convictions. Know not only what you believe, but why. Give diligence to rightly divide the word of revelation that has been finally and completely delivered.

Not only did Jude urge them to know their own convictions and stand firm on them, but in the following verses Jude assails the apostates directly. Before the enemy of Christ can be properly assailed, however, one must make sure of his own defenses. When an enemy is attacked, he will fight back.

To attack an enemy when one has no position of his own is pointless. If one succeeds in such an attack, then nothing will be left. All positive conviction will have been destroyed and only hopeless chaos and meaningless void will result. This has been the result in too many modern churches of the twentieth century. Men with no positive convictions about the gospel have attacked the faith of the believers in the church. They have won their battle, and the faith of the brethren is destroyed. The church is left void. It is left completely useless, and has no reason for further existence. There is no growth, because there is no positive conviction that appeals to men outside the organization. There is hardly even a spark of life left.

If one loses such an attack, then the enemy, who does have positive convictions, will have won over his attacker. This would be tragic if the attacker were the Christian, and this is Jude's point. Establish yourself in the faith so that your position is unassailable. "Give diligence to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." So Jude says, "contend earnestly for the faith . . ."

The believer who does this is insuring himself against attacks of the apostate. The believer who knows the Word of God knows all things (that were revealed) once for all. He is thus fortified by true knowledge from God. He is in a position to be "kept for Jesus Christ" because he "contends earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints."

Note the two-fold action: God keeps us (verse 1), and we "contend" that we might be kept (verse 3). The two actions must go together. God wishes that we be kept, and He provides the way. We put ourselves in the way and see to it that we meet the conditions

that will insure God's keeping us. God does not keep anyone against his will. Man not only makes such a choice at the moment of his conversion, but he continues to make a choice daily as for what he will contend and to whom he will be kept.

### *A WRITTEN WARNING OF APOSTASY*

Jude 4

#### *Text*

4. For there are certain men crept in privily, even they who were of old written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

#### *Queries*

9. In your own words state why Jude is warning to contend earnestly for the faith.
10. Does the text indicate that these false teachers would soon come, or had already come?
11. Unto where had these ungodly men crept?
12. What does the word "crept" indicate as to the manner in which the men came?
13. The "written beforehand" of our text is more correct than the "of old" in the King James. There was a definite warning just as stated in 2 Peter chapter 3. It seems that this 2 Peter passage was written beforehand. See if you can find the exact quote in 2 Peter 3. Also note the warning given in 2 Peter 2.
14. What is the "condemnation" which these men shall receive? (see 2 Peter 2:4-9)
15. The word "lasciviousness" is associated with all the evils of the human heart. How could the grace of God be turned into lasciviousness?
16. There are three words that describe the man Jesus. What are they in the text?
17. There are three words that describe these condemned men. What are the three?

*Paraphrases*

- A. 4. It is necessary to fight for the faith because certain men have sneaked into the fellowship of saints for the purpose of changing the new life we have through grace into a life of evil deeds. In the process they also deny that Jesus is the Christ and our reigning Lord, who is our only Master. These are the ungodly men the former writing warned about, who, in the writing, were reserved unto a judgment of God.
- B.\*4. I say this because some godless teachers have wormed their way in among you saying after we become Christians we can do just as we like without fear of God's punishment. The fate of such people was written long ago, for they have turned against our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

*Summary*

He explains that these ungodly men secretly came in to deceive by changing God's grace to vile action and faith in Jesus to denial of Him. These are men who were condemned to eternal punishment.

*Comment*

There is something about the manner of expression that indicates the apostates have slipped in with stealth and deliberate intention to deceive. This is not a brother who has made a mistake, but a crafty deceiver who intends to lead the brother to make a mistake. These are like the false brethren in the Galatian church who "unawares brought in, came privily to spy out our liberty." (Gal. 2:4) By the practice of cunning craftiness and sly deception of men they lie in wait to deceive (Eph. 4:14).

Such a clever enemy demands our utmost care and defense. His craftiness makes his camouflage hard to spot. He may have "come out from among us," or he may have come in from outside. Like a mole he remains underground where he undermines the very faith of the brethren. His doctrine makes a life of loose-living seem proper: "Who can say the Christian is not supposed to enjoy the 'good' things of life? If God did not intend for us to sin a little, drink a little, lust a little, then He would not have allowed these things on earth! Besides that, we all sin a little . . . even the best of us. God certainly will not blame us for a little sin, for did He not give us all the same

kind of a body with its appetites? Surely God will not expect us to become psychotic by restricting and inhibiting the desires which He gave us and which we all have in common."

On and on the argument goes. Such cleverness and subtle cunning tempts the elect of God to be ensnared in the tangled web of sinful disobedience, until finally he is defending that which once he preached against.

Their condemnation was "before of old" declared. The same expression is used in Hebrews 1:1 and translated "times past". When was this declaration of their condemnation made? The first and most likely answer seems to be found in 2 Peter chapter two. Yet both this passage and the one in Jude refer to Old Testament scriptures that reveal, by their examples, a condemnation. Immediate references are made to such Old Testament historical examples. The indication is that the same judgment received by the devil and his angels, by Sodom and Gomorrah, and by the Egyptians that laid spoil on the Israelites is the judgment ("condemnation") that shall be given to these apostates.

It is also proper to note the judgment ("condemnation") pronounced upon the "ungodly men" who are deceiving apostates, and not upon the saints of the church who are contending earnestly for the faith. The church certainly suffers because of the intruders, but it is the intruders who are under condemnation. Of course, one may argue that the church members who aid and agree with the intruders in their apostasy will also share with them in their judgment; but the judgment rightly belongs to the intruders. How careful God's people must be not to share the sin of apostasy and thus share the judgment of apostasy!

Just as dangerous as leading the Christian in a life of loose-living, is the teaching that robs the saint of his faith in the person of Jesus. They deny "our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." This particular phase of the apostasy may not appear to immediately harm the brethren, but in the long run it is the most venomous of all. The seed of doubt strikes at the very roots of the church, the foundation of the gospel. There is no teaching in the Christian system that has more importance than the teaching concerning who is this man Jesus.

The fact that Jesus is our only Master makes our relationship to Him and our understanding of who He is all the more important.

Lasciviousness describes conduct that is shameless and shocking to public decency. It is descriptive of petulant wantonness, or even li-

centious lechery. The apostasy is of such a nature that the good, acceptable, and complete will of God (Rom. 12:2) is changed into something vile and repulsive to the general public. This is the most repugnant of all apostasy in that wholesomeness is changed to corruption. It is no wonder that the warning appears so strong.

Jesus here is identified as "Lord," the very fact denied by the apostates. God's ruling power is indicated by the word. The Christian's respect and submission to the rule of God makes the transformation of his life and the salvation of his soul the proper result of God's grace. Truly blessed is the man who regards God as his absolute Lord.

That we are the servant of him whom we obey is an established fact of scripture. This is the *Lord* relationship. He is our Lord when we submit to Him as such. Otherwise, He is the Lord but not our Lord. The confession that Jesus is our Lord is an indirect objection to owning any other party as Lord. The man who submits to the appetites of the flesh and the deceptions of the devil by such also submits to his flesh and to the devil as his "lord." As such, he has submitted himself to the very ones who will destroy his soul and bring him misery in even this life.

Apostasy of life is a result of apostasy of doctrine. The life we see, but the doctrine we believe. The most apparent problem in the church is the problem of life; but the most subtle is the problem of doctrine. Recognition and submission to the right Lord is the only foundation upon which the right life can be built.

True, the right doctrine does not guarantee the right life. One can recognize the fact of Jesus' lordship and still not submit himself to the Lord. Many people will recognize the fact of the gospel but refuse to lay hold upon salvation. This in no way invalidates the importance of right doctrine. Jesus is the only absolute Lord and the only universal Lord, and this fact must be admitted and proclaimed before the problem of the right life can be adequately dealt with. Complete recognition of Christ as Lord is made with the life as well as with the lips.

A second fact denied by the ungodly men was that the man Jesus was the Christ promised in the Old Testament. The divinity of the Christ promised in the Old Testament was admitted, but the Gnostics claimed that no man could possess any more than a spark of the Divine; not even God Himself could put on sinful flesh. Thus, they said, Jesus was not the Christ, for such was an impossibility.

Denying the divinity of Jesus was not limited to the Gnostics. Just who was this man Jesus is the prime consideration of all Christianity and the quarrel of the modernist in religious circles today. To denounce unbelief is to denounce a large segment of religious leaders as well as many "professing" Christians. The fact that Jesus is the Christ is the confession of faith admitted by all true Christians and is the real mark of division.

The Messiahship of Jesus demands our recognition of Him as Lord and King. He is greater than Abraham, Moses and Solomon. He was more than a man in whom God dwelt, for He was God in the flesh. Jesus said concerning His own Person: "This generation is an evil generation; it seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah. For even as Jonah became a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and shall condemn them: for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here. The men of Ninevah shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here." (Luke 11:29-32).

### TEACHING ON APOSTASY FROM OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

Jude 5-8

*Text*

5. Now I desire to put you in remembrance, though ye know all things once for all, that the Lord, having saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.
6. And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.
7. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire.
8. Yet in like manner these also in their dreamings defile the flesh, and set at nought dominion, and rail at dignities.

*Queries*

18. Why is Jude asking them to remember something?
19. Does Jude mean they knew everything that God knows?
20. All of *what* things did they know?
21. Does this "once for all" refer to the same thing as the expression in Jude 2?
22. *Two* great facts about the Israelites are mentioned in verse 5. What are both?
23. How could both of these facts have a possible bearing on the case Jude is proving?
24. God knew before that most of these Israelites would not believe. Why did He wait until 'afterwards' to destroy them?
25. How was the unbelief of the Israelites demonstrated?
26. To what angels is Jude referring in verse 6?
27. How could the angel's "proper habitation" have any relationship to the Christian's proper habitation today?
28. Who is the chief angel among those described in verse 6?
29. Has the "great day" of verse 6 come yet? To what does it refer?
30. Will there be people who will join these angels in this condemnation? (See Matt. 25:41).
31. What was the "proper habitation" for the angels?
32. "Everlasting bonds" suggest the angels are bound to a certain place, or away from a certain place. To what place, or from what place, could these angels have been bound?
33. If they are bound to this earth, how could this be said to be "under darkness?"
34. Does verse 7 suggest that the angels have committed fornication also? (Read carefully several times).
35. In what way could the rebellion of Satan against God be termed "going after strange flesh? (Note the expression "like manner").
36. Does verse 7 say, or even indicate, that angels have committed fornication with people?
37. To what must "eternal fire" refer?
38. Just *how* these men defile the flesh, set at nought dominion, and rail at dignities is clearly set forth in verse 8. How were they doing these things?
39. The word "dominion" refers to authority. Can you think of more



than one kind of authority that might possibly be included by the word?

40. "Dignities" means literally "glories", or "glorious ones." Could these dignities be the evil angels? Is it likely?

*Paraphrases*

- A. 5. Now I wish you would recall these things, to follow what you remember from previous revelation, which was given once for all, how that Jesus delivered a people from the oppression in Egypt, and then destroyed these same people because they refused to believe.
6. And also the angels who stayed not within the realm of their own jurisdiction, but encroached upon God, He has eternally bound them from heaven away from the light of God even until that great day of destruction.
7. Like such cities as Sodom and Gomorrah, who with the same kind of action surrendered themselves to the sin of fornication and other lewd lusting, had their fate in eternal fire recorded for our benefit.
8. In the same way the apostate teaching of these men lead to lusting and fornication, and encroaching upon the rights of God.
- B.\*5. My answer to them is: remember this fact—which you know already—that the Lord saved a whole nation of people out of the land of Egypt, and then killed every one of them who did not trust and obey Him.
6. And I remind you of those angels who were once pure and holy, but willingly turned to a life of sin. Now God has them chained up in prisons of darkness, waiting for the judgment day.
7. And don't forget the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns, all full of lust of every kind including lust of men for other men. Those cities were destroyed by fire and continue to be a warning to us that there is a hell in which sinners are punished.
8. Yet these false teachers go on living their evil immoral lives, degrading their bodies and laughing at those in authority over them, even scoffing at the glorious ones—those mighty powers of awful evil who left their first estate.

*Summary*

Like those examples in the Old Testament, these men have done things to reserve for them a place in hell.

*Comment*

The purpose of the scripture is not only to instruct us concerning the will of God, but to stir up in our memory lest we forget. Peter says the purpose of both his epistles was to stir up their minds through their "remembrance," (2 Peter 3:1). Paul instructs Timothy to "put them in remembrance," (2 Tim. 2:14). So it is not strange that Jude would have us draw lessons from the scriptures imbedded in our own memories.

Here Jude makes use of the vast storehouse of evidence that every man should have: his memory. Without memory there can be no growth, neither spiritual nor scholastic. Without memory the conscience would be dead and man's will would have no purpose. A good memory we should strive for, build up, and treasure.

Memories of trite and unimportant data are of little use, except for the possibility of memory training itself. But memory that builds our treasury of evidence concerning things spiritual brings us many benefits. Jude here asks his readers to remember important events and lessons from the Old Testament. These events will furnish evidence as to the natural result of these apostate teachings, and as to the end of the apostates themselves. If we know the scriptures, we know all things once for all delivered by God for us. By this knowledge we are enabled to "discern the spirits, whether they be good or bad." This is Jude's purpose in these verses.

Manuscripts are divided as to whether it was "Jesus" or the "Lord" that delivered the people from Egypt. The evidence is about equally divided with the advantage being to the reading of "Jesus." Many commentators object to reading "Jesus" here. They claim that Jesus could have had nothing to do with Old Testament events or that Jesus is not mentioned in connection with Jewish history; or, as Plummer states, Jesus is "nowhere else in the scripture stated to be the author of anything which took place before the Incarnation."

It is not difficult to conceive that Jesus had to do with the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. Jesus had to do even with the creation of the universe. "All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made." (John 1:3)

Jesus has to do with keeping all things in existence, "upholding all things by the word of his power." (Heb. 1:3) So it seems that "he that descended out of heaven" (John 3:13) was busy about the Father's business before His putting on flesh.

The purpose of the illustration concerning deliverance from Egypt and the eventual destruction of those delivered is to call the lessons to our remembrance. God will not forever tolerate a continual murmuring against His dominion. The Israelites "believed not" the words of the Lord, and because of their unbelief that which they should have known became the unknown to them. They trembled in the face of the giants and wept when water was not in sight—even before they were thirsty! With evidence of God's care manifest continually, they still chose to disbelieve He would continue, and insulted Him by doubting His word. They were destroyed.

Another Old Testament apostasy used for an example is the fallen angels'. They "kept not their first estate" (More correctly; kept not their own dignity). The results of their apostasy show the seriousness. Such a terrible apostasy with such serious results would certainly be referred to in other scriptures, and that it is. The parallel with the passage in 2 Peter is not to be discounted. "For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;—" leaves no doubt as to the reference. The original fall of the devil and his angels is a prime example of apostasy. "What then is the everlasting bonds under darkness?" one may ask. These everlasting bonds must be the prohibition of these fallen angels from the presence of God. Like Satan himself, they roam this earth seeking to devour God's elect; but they are shut off from the light of God's presence forever. In this fashion they await the final judgment and condemnation where they shall be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." (Rev. 20:10)

There are some who prefer to interpret this passage to mean another period of angels being tested and falling. Although a second testing and falling is not a scriptural doctrine, such an interpretation is given to the account of giants in Genesis 6.1ff. The expression "sons of God" in Gen. 6:2 is a reference to angels, it is claimed. Thus the angels saw that women on earth they were pretty, and decided to cohabit with them. The resultant children of these unholy alliances were "giants."

There are a number of problems that make such an interpretation unlikely. For one, the expression "sons of God" does not have to mean angels. The expression is used of angels in the Old Testament. The expression used in Gen. 6, however, most obviously refers to that which is being described in the context of Gen. 5. Here we find the descendants of Seth described as a righteous people. Of these people were such as Enoch, who "walked with God." (Gen. 5:22) The most natural and proper interpretation would be that the sons of God in Gen. 6:2 refer to the righteous descendants of Seth described in chapter five.

Again it is not necessary to invent some physical abnormality nor some unholy alliance with the demon world in order to explain "giants." There are many mysteries in this world that the Bible does not explain. The scripture does not attempt to make any explanation of the source of colored pigmentations in the skins of different peoples. Why one people would be brown, another yellow, another white, and another black was not considered by the Spirit a subject worthy of explanation. Likewise, why there should be a nation of pigmies and another of giants differing from the sizes of most peoples is not considered to be knowledge essential to our spiritual welfare.

"But why is the word *giants* used in Gen. 6:2 as a result of these marriages?" one may ask. The word in Gen. 6:4 is more properly "Nephilim" or "mighty men." Although the word can mean "giants," it also can mean "bullies, rough-necks or robbers." These are not the giants that the spies saw in Canaan, for the flood destroyed these men in Gen. 6. Genesis 6:4 calls these "Nephilim," "mighty men that were of old, the men of renown." From Gen. 6:5 forward we see that these men were renowned because of their wickedness, so it seems proper that they were men mighty in wickedness and evil also.

The most natural interpretation of Gen. 6:1-4 is that the descendants of Seth (sons of God) married the daughters of men (beautiful women from the line of Cain) with the result that their children became wicked and evil like their mothers; until finally there was only one righteous family left; Noah and his sons. The passage in chapter 6 is evidently given to explain why only one righteous family remained from Seth's line.

The most likely source for the doctrine of angels marrying women is the book of Enoch. The book of Enoch is an obviously uninspired book, containing contradictions within itself and clear contradictions

with the scriptures. This apocryphal book dates back to the second century, and some would claim the book actually pre-dates Jude. There is one passage similar in both books, and much similarity of content. It is not clear, however, that Jude quoted Enoch, or that Enoch quoted Jude. Jude in his reference to "Enoch" is referring to the Old Testament descendant of Adam, for he so states. It is possible that the book of Enoch was not in existence or was not known by Jude at the time he wrote. If so, then it might be claimed that the book of Enoch was a partial quote of the inspired writing of Jude. Many modern scholars today, however, tend to give a late date to Jude and claim that Jude quoted from Enoch.

The book of Enoch has this to say regarding Genesis 6:

"And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another: Come, let us choose wives from among the children of men and beget us children . . . And they were in all two hundred; who descended in the days of Jared on the summit of Mount Hermon . . . and all the others together with them took unto themselves wives, and each for himself one, and they began to go in unto them and to defile themselves with them, and they taught them charms and enchantments, and the cutting of roots, and made them acquainted with plants. And they became pregnant, and they bare great giants, whose height was three thousand ells: Who consumed all the acquisitions of men. And when men could no longer sustain them, the giants, turned against them and devoured mankind . . . they have gone to the daughters of men upon the earth, and have slept with the women, and have defiled themselves, and revealed to them all kinds of sins. And the women have borne giants . . . Bind Azazel (the leader of those angels) hand and foot and cast him into the darkness: and make an opening in the desert, which is in Dudael, and cast him therein. And place upon him rough and jagged rocks, and cover him with darkness, and let him abide there for ever, and cover his face that he may not see light. And on the day of the great judgment he shall be cast into the fire (Book of Enoch 6 and 7:1, 9:9 and chap. 10. Extract from commentary on Jude by Wolff, pp70)

Sodom and Gomorrah is a third Old Testament example of apostasy. This apostasy is probably chosen to point out the sensual nature of the false teaching of the Gnostics as well as the certain destruction

to follow. Sodom and Gomorrah in rejecting God became the famous Old Testament example of the devolution of sin described in Rom. 1:28-32. The sinfulness and vileness of giving over to sensuous desires is nowhere more obvious.

The ultimate end (of the Gnostic teaching that it doesn't make any difference what one does since the flesh is sinful anyway) is the same as the end of Sodom and Gomorrah. "In like manner" says Jude, these philosophers will "defile the flesh." Rotten doctrine in public school will make rotten lives in public school children. So the Gnostic doctrine was rotten, and it could make the lives of the Christians who followed it also rotten.

The Gnostic doctrine would also cause Christians to scoff at the authority and dominion of Jehovah, even as the fallen angels had done. And who today would deny that any modern teaching that tends to make Christ less than Lord and to make Jehovah less than the ever existent Creator would not likewise lead Christians to "set at nought dominion and rail at glories?" Every Christian should be horrified because of this possible result of false teaching.

*A METAPHORE FROM THE SPIRITUAL WORLD  
THAT ILLUSTRATES APOSTASY*

Jude 9-10

*Text*

9. But Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing judgment, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.
10. But these rail at whatsoever things they know not: and what they understand naturally, like the creatures without reason, in these things are they destroyed.

*Queries*

41. What does the word "Michael" mean? (refer to a good Bible dictionary or encyclopaedia).
42. What is Michael as described in the Old Testament? (see Daniel 10:13)
43. Why did Michael dare not rail and accuse the devil? What would have been wrong with his doing so?

44. No Old Testament passage tells of such a dispute. Does this mean that Jude is in error in referring to such a dispute? Why so or why not?
45. Is it necessary to find some written or secular source for everything that Jude wrote?
46. Who buried Moses? (See Deut. 34:6)
47. What is a "railing" accusation?
48. Does the text indicate that Michael actually made an accusation against satan? In what way?
49. How can Michael's action express confidence in God?
50. How can we in the same manner express confidence in God?
51. Who are the ones in verse 10 that speak evil?
52. What kind of things is it that they do not know?
53. What is it to "know naturally?" (See the phrase that follows.)
54. Does the phrase "like the creatures without reason" refer to what follows, or what goes before? (Read carefully!)

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 9. When Michael the archangel had a contention with the devil about the body of Moses, Michael dared not shout an accusation against even the devil; but instead acknowledged that the Lord would rebuke him.
10. These apostates, however, shout accusations about eternal things when they know nothing about them. The fleshly lusts that they have in common with all animals is the one thing they do know, and this thing makes them corrupt.
- B.\*9. Even Michael, one of the mightiest of the angels, when he was arguing with Satan about Moses' body, did not dare to accuse Satan, or jeer at him, but simply said, "The Lord rebuke you."
10. But these men mock and curse at anything they do not understand, and, like animals, they do whatever they feel like, thereby ruining their souls.

### *Summary*

Even Michael would not presume to accuse the devil, who was obviously wrong; but these men make accusation in their ignorance while being consumed by their own lusts.

Michael is pictured in the scriptures as an angel having authority and leading the angelic army of God. (See Rev. 12:7 and Dan. 12:1) In Daniel 10:13 he is called "one of the chief princes." His fame as an angelic being really excels in the Rabbinical traditions. Here he is given such titles as "great high-priest in heaven" and "great prince and conqueror." The book of Enoch also has many mentions of Michael. There is no cause to even hint that Jude received his ideas about Michael from the book of Enoch or from the Rabbinical traditions. His identity is established in the word of God. Jude no doubt was acquainted with the teachings in Daniel regarding Michael.

Moreover, had there been no teachings in the scripture regarding Michael, let us remember that Jude is an inspired writer who writes as he is moved by the Spirit of God.

God certainly had a message for Jude to deliver, and it comes as no surprise should we discover that Jude contains some information regarding Biblical history or regarding God's will for us that is not duplicated elsewhere in the Scriptures. A constant search of secular writings to try to determine where Jude received his ideas is unnecessary and possibly even futile when one considers the inspiration of the spirit under which he wrote.

The dispute about the body of Moses is a case in point. No such debate is recorded elsewhere in the Scriptures. Yet we know it happened because it is recorded here. Scholars have searched far and wide in an effort to determine the source of Jude's information. Some have concluded that Jude had access to scripture texts that have been lost. Some indicate that there was no such dispute, but that the reference has a figurative explanation wherein the body of Moses represents the Jewish community after captivity. Some say that the apocryphal book *The Ascension of Moses* at the time contained reference to this dispute, and that Jude received his information from this book. The case is hypothetical, for we do not know that Jude had such a text available to him, and the *Ascension of Moses* as it is today has no reference to such a dispute.

That the Jews had an enormous amount of traditions regarding the death of Moses is not denied. These traditions do refer to such a controversy, with Michael being the chief contender. Can it be that Jude "copied" from these traditions?

Because traditions in themselves do not prove truth and certainly



are not infallible as authority, we may erroneously assume that no truth could possibly be contained in tradition. Certainly traditions are often a mixture of truth and fable. An inspired writer such as Jude by the inspiration of the Spirit, would be able to distinguish truth from falsehood. The source back of Jude is the Holy Spirit. Whether or not the fact is contained in the Jewish traditions has nothing to do with the establishment of that fact.

What is Jude's intention in recording the fact? It is to point out that these unholy apostate teachers bring railing accusations of a nature that even the high angel of God dared not bring against the devil himself! The entire doctrine of the Gnostics was implied accusation against angelic beings and even against Jehovah. They (the Gnostics) had access to knowledge that God had not revealed in the scriptures. Through their ritualism they knew truth that the inspired writers of both the Old and the New Testaments did not have. These false teachers presumed to add to or alter the Word of God.

Unlike these false teachers, Michael (who well knew the judgment the devil deserved) glorified God as the great Judge. He dared not presume to take this judgment from God, or even to share in it as Moses himself did in the wilderness. God alone knows how to punish the wicked without partiality and with complete justice.

What a lesson for us in this! How often are we tempted to both determine the inner thoughts of our fellow man and then to pronounce the judgment? Like Jonah we sit under a bush and pout because judgment does not come in a manner we choose, or at the time we choose, or to the person we choose. We presume to assume that every man who does not have the same understanding of the Word of God that we have is destined to hell, when really we are often at a distance and in the dark as to what the man's understanding and obedient nature really is. And if we really did understand, should we presume to be the author of another man's judgment? Should we presume to be the author of the rebuke (assuming one was due) or should we, like Michael, leave the rebuking to the Lord?

The word used for "rebuke" here is not the word for reproving another man that he might see his sin. Rather it is a word that means to chide, or censure severely. In love and Christian concern we might bring another man to see his wrong-doing so that he might repent and his soul be saved. (See James 5:19-20) But it is not ours to chide or "rub it in."

Michael, in his manner of response to the devil, expressed a real confidence in God. He knew that God would bring a just judgment, and he was entirely willing to be submissive to God's will and content in God's judgment. Oh, that we would likewise be content and submissive to God; showing great confidence in the work of God, both in the spiritual realm of judgment and in the material realm of God's care in this life. God is on His throne, and He knows every tear, every heartache and every need of his servants. This is a part of our faith.

Jude, like his brother James, condemns the misuse of the tongue. (vs. 8, 10, 11, 15, 16) He clearly states they speak evil, and this in a manner feared even by the angels. Yet their evil speaking is in ignorance. They know not what evil they speak, nor of whom they speak it. They do know they rail and that it is sinful. Out of an evil inclination they proceed arrogantly through the darkness. They have turned out the lights lest they see. Their very ignorance is guilt and needs to be forgiven. (Luke 23:34) They hate the light because their intentions are evil. (John 3:20)

Their practice is sensual; and like a cow or a horse, they thoroughly know the practices and objects that bring them sensual enjoyment. They follow their natural appetite and live to feed their senses. What they don't know they blaspheme, and what they do know destroys them.

### A TRILOGY OF WOE

Jude 11

#### *Text*

11. Woe unto them! for they went in the way of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire, and perished in the gain-saying of Korah.

#### *Queries*

55. Three examples of punishment are given in this verse. What are they?
56. What was Cain's sin? (see Gen. 4: I John 3:15).
57. What was Balaam's sin? (Num. 22:7ff).
58. What was Korah's sin? (Num. 16:1-3; 31-35).

59. Motivations for the sin of Balaam and Korah are given. What are they?
60. Write the three verbs describing the action of the apostates. Note the progress of action from one to another.

*Paraphrases*

- A. 11. How horrible is their impending doom! They have traveled the same way that Cain traveled. They have run helter skelter, hither and thither, like Balaam, chasing a sensual indulgence. They have been consumed by the same bold, haughty ambition of Korah.
- B.\*11. Woe unto them! For they follow the example of Cain who killed his brother; and, like Balaam, they will do anything for money; and, like Korah, they have disobeyed God in the hope of gain and will die under His curse.

*Summary*

What a tragedy! They have thrown themselves to destruction like Cain, Balaam, and Korah.

*Comment*

Woe upon them! The exclamation expresses grief and/or denunciation. Jude neither gives the woe nor wishes it; but he sees it clearly in the three examples from the Old Testament. His heart is filled with grief over their plight. With saddened eyes he sees them sinning the sins condemned so long ago. Their wickedness has been proclaimed, and now he predicts their misery.

Cain's way was one of envy, hatred, and murder. These apostates disdain the welfare of the saints and use them to their own selfish purposes. Like Cain, they do not believe that God means what He says. They are walking the same road as this "archtype" of all bad men. Hateful and envious of their brethren, they are guilty of Cain's type of murder. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." (I John 3:15)

One wonders how many Christians within the church today are beginning the same walk as Cain. Not willing to repent, they begin to dislike and even rebel at the example of godliness in their brethren.

ren. Soon their dislike will turn to complete disregard and hatred, and they will find the Christian examples about them unbearable. This is the road of hatred and murder. This is the road of Cain.

Balaam was looking for a reward from the king, and sold his life in a futile chase for money. He was drowned in destruction and perdition in attempting to curse the people of God. For money he would do what Cain did for hate. So it is that money figures largely in the motivation for these apostates. Doctrine is a matter of pay, not a matter of truth, and in reaching for the pay they depart from the truth. They ignore the warning of I Timothy 6:9,10: "But they that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

Korah rebelled against God's authority. He was envious and jealous of the authority God gave to Moses and Aaron; so he presumed to share in that authority. This was contrary to God's expressed instruction. With a terrifying finality and suddenness, punishment followed. The earth opened up and swallowed the wicked men and their followers. Fire from God consumed all the goods that pertained to these men. In a moment Israel learned a lesson that caused them to flee in terror.

How serious is rebellion against divine authority! How certain will be the result! With what fear and respect we should follow after the authority of God. These apostates did not do so. They ignored the authority of Jehovah, and worked out their own rules by which they conducted their lives. The doctrine in God's revelation they ignored, and were ignorantly content to create teachings that satisfied their own ears and pleased their own lusts.

Can it be that people today, even within the church of the living God, also ignore divine instruction? Will people today follow after the ways of Korah and invent offices, positions, and authority for themselves; contrary to the revelation of God? Korah was not the first, but his destruction should have been a lesson for all mankind. These apostates are not the last, for this seems to be one way for an evil heart. May God help us to find His authority sufficient, and like Michael submit ourselves to His will.

There also seems to be a progress in the action expressed in these three examples. The apostates "went in the way" of Cain, "ran in the

VERSES TWELVE AND THIRTEEN vs. 12, 13

error" of Balaam, and "perished in the gainsaying" of Korah. Such is a way of sin. First one walks, then one runs; and finally one is consumed. The lusts of the flesh have the same process. First there is a sinful play with the fire. Then there comes a frantic chase after the sin; and finally one is completely consumed in his lusts. Sin is a snare that draws tighter with indulgence. Sin is not a single trap, but a series of traps, each one stronger and more vicious than the last. It begins with playful rebellion and ends with total destruction. "Woe unto them!"

*METAPHORES FROM NATURE THAT  
ILLUSTRATE APOSTASY*

Jude 12-13

*Text*

12. These are they who are hidden rocks in your love-feasts when they feast with you, shepherds that without fear feed themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without roots;
13. wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever.

*Queries*

61. Jude compares these apostates with five different things from nature. What are they?
62. What does the King James translation call these hidden "rocks?"
63. In what way would a hidden rock in a feast cause trouble? (Imagine a rock in a dish of dried beans).
64. What is implied by the expression: A shepherd that feeds himself without fear?
65. What does Prov. 25:14 compare to a cloud without water?
66. Can you see any significance in the fact that the clouds are "carried along by winds"? If so, what?
67. Why do you think he specifically mentions "autumn" trees?
68. In what way are these trees "twice" dead?
69. In what way are these apostates "twice" dead?

The manuscripts seem to differ as to whether the reading is "rocks" or "hidden rocks". In either case, the reading should be "rocks" rather than the "spots" of *King James*.

Shepherds they are called. The word means "those who tend the flock." A secondary meaning of "feed themselves" (shepherds) is to furnish pasture, or nourishment, to one's body; thus to serve the body. This last meaning seems to be in keeping with the textual context, for they *feed themselves without fear*. They do not look for nor dread any possible correction, expulsion from the brotherhood, nor punishment from God. Absorbed in the satisfaction of their own sensuous desires they have no thought for feeding their souls.

The waterless clouds, that raise men's hopes but are always a disappointment, are also referred to in 2 Peter 2:14,17. They are clouds that blot out the light of God and bring no moisture for growth. Ever visible they are, as well as ever fruitless. Unstable, at the mercy of every wind of false doctrine; they are "carried with the tempest." They are strangers to the faithful word, and have no fixed direction in their own course.

While the stars in heaven keep a fixed course in relation to the rotation of the earth, there are planets that appear as stars, but wander off the fixed course. They are not in the same orbit as the other stars, and their relative wanderings appear aimless and unrelated. So are these libertines as they hold not to the faith that had been delivered to the saints once for all. Their lives are a departure from the Christlike witness that is normal for the Christian. Their witness appears aimless and unrelated to Jesus Christ.

Their sensuous passions are beaten constantly into a filthy, roaring foam. Their shameful deeds ("shames") are the only fruits of their agitations. The "hidden things of shame" (2 Cor. 4:2) are not renounced by them, but rather from the depths of their rotten lives are the seaweeds and dirt, mire and unclean scum, that are laid bare as the foam of their agitation bursts forth upon the sands of time.

Their destiny is also shown forth by the aimless stars of heaven. With no fixed course but wandering aimlessly about the blackness of space, they have both all expanse and all eternity without any hope of a resting place with God.

Such sensuality among the brethren within the living church of God is not an impossibility. The libertines of that day had their places for feeding the desires of the flesh and promoting sensuality. Today, however, the very home itself has become a spawning area

for all kinds of filth. Magazines that contain all kinds and all amounts of sex are often carried, even through the mails, into the home. The television set has become a "living" fixture in the home that carries death through sensuality as many as twenty or more hours in every day. Spirituality is lost in the sensual desire for the sensuous programs. Wednesday night prayer services, and even the Sunday evening church services have been overwhelmed by the avalanche of fleshly carnality via the TV. Entire churches have dismissed these services, admitting defeat. Time for prayer and devotions within the home is no more. There are too many "programs" that might be missed. There are too many games to be played and too many parties to be attended. Besides all this, if there were regular devotions within the home, where would one find time to cook, eat, sleep, and cook again? The appetites of the flesh are many, and they cry out as demanding in this day as the day in which the epistle of Jude was written. May God help us to heed the warning.

# TEACHING ON APOSTASY FROM OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

Jude 14-16

## *Text*

14. And to these also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones,
15. to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.
16. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their lusts (and their mouth speaketh great swelling words), showing respect of persons for the sake of advantage.

## *Queries*

75. There were only five patriarchs between Adam and Enoch. How could Enoch be called the seventh from Adam?
76. Who, probably, are the "holy ones" referred to in verse fourteen?
77. Is there any other place in the scripture where it is said that

the Lord will come to judge the ungodly? Can you find some of them?

78. What in verse 16 might tempt a person to show respect of persons?
79. Why would a person who was living to please himself more likely be a murmurer and complainer than one who lived to please God and others?
80. Does our murmuring and complaining reveal anything about whom we love first of all? What?

### *Paraphrases*

- A. 14. Enoch, of the seventh generation counting from Adam, prophesied telling how the Lord would come with ten thousand times ten thousand holy ones to sit in judgment at his court.
15. These will establish the guilt of the ungodly deeds performed by all the ungodly ones, and bring sentence because of all the evil things spoken against the Lord.
16. This includes these libertines who are so wrapped up in their own fleshly desires they complain continually. In their murmurings they speak arrogantly, giving special favours to those who can and will feed their vain desires.
- B.\*14. Enoch, who lived long ago soon after Adam, knew about these men and said this about them: "See, the Lord is going to come with millions of His people;
15. "He will bring the people of the world before Him in judgment, to receive just punishment, and to prove the terrible things they have done in rebellion against God, revealing all they have said against Him."
16. These men are constant gripers, never satisfied, doing whatever evil they feel like; they are loud-mouthed "show-offs," and when they show respect for others, it is only to get something from them in return.

### *Summary*

The patriarch Enoch told how God would bring judgment upon all evil deeds, including these apostates within the church.



*Comment*

Verses 14 and 15 are considered to be difficult because there is no recorded prophecy of Enoch saying these things in the scripture. The apocryphal book of *Enoch* does ascribe similar passages as being prophesied by Enoch. Again, the comments on verse 9 also applies here. There is no need to insist that Jude copied from *Enoch*. The fact that Jude does include the reference as fact, so establishes it. By the Holy Spirit Jude knew this to be fact, whether or not he was familiar with a similar statement in the book of *Enoch*.

The information that Jude here gives establishes one additional fact we would not otherwise have from the scriptures: That Enoch himself made these prophesies. The prophesies are contained elsewhere in the scripture, in both the Old and New Testaments. Daniel says "a thousand thousand served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened." (Dan. 7:10) Zechariah says "Then the Lord your God will come, and all the holy ones with him." (Zech. 14:5) Such references also may be located in the book of Revelation.

The Jewish method of counting included the first and last figure. Thus Jesus was said to have been in the grave three days, counting the day He was buried and the day He arose. By the time a child reached the age of one year and one day (as we would say it), the Jews would call the child age two. Likewise, in counting generations the first and last generations were counted. So it was that Enoch was the seventh generation from Adam, counting both Adam and Enoch.

The prophesy is given to verify the fact of the judgment to come. The language of prophecy is often from the viewpoint of God: as good as accomplished! Such is the case here. The Lord *came* with ten thousand of his holy ones. Holy ones is correct rather than the saints of the *King James*. Angels are included among God's holy ones, and the reference here could well be to angels. The figure ten thousand is a common figure to denote a very great number. Sometimes the expression "a thousand thousands" or "ten thousand times ten thousand" is used.

The purpose "to do judgment" is the same expression used in John 5:27.

The spiritual gift of discerning of spirits gave the Corinthian church the ability to make manifest the secrets of the heart of the unbelieving prophet. He stood reproved by all and judged by all.

(I Cor. 14:24-25). In that last day when the Lord shall come the second time, the ungodly shall be manifest and his wicked deeds laid bare in their true colors. The ungodly life in which they wallowed is not a mistake, nor a stumbling sin. It is a chosen way of vileness and deceit. Their wickedness is well-pleasing to them; and if it were not for the wages there would be no regret.

Their hard speeches, like Lamech (Gen. 4:15), are uttered in defiance against God. This is comparable to the ungodly men of I Peter 4:4, who speak irreverently of God or against believers.

Verse sixteen does not let these present ungodly men escape the judgment predicted. *These* are the ones who murmur and complain because they think only of pleasing themselves. *These* are the ones who speak great swelling words against God and against God's people. *These* are the ones who show partiality because of personal profit expected. They refuse to submit where it is rightful they should, and they do submit where personal gain may be obtained. Their flattery (admiration of faces, literally) is soon found out, for when there is no personal profit to them the admiration is suddenly gone. Their lives are strewn with great havoc and hatred for they make merchandise of many. (Rom. 16:18 and 2 Peter 2:3). They will even feign repentance for the sake of personal gain.

The sincere Christian who knows such a one hates himself for the knowing. He knows the smile for its insincerity, and when he sees the smile he can only expect to be immediately used. A hatred for the evil and a distrust of the person is the only end of knowing such a one. A sincere saint does not relish this ever-present evil and necessary distrust. So it is that misery dogs those who cross the path of these insincere flatterers who are partial for the sake of advantage.

### A SPOKEN WARNING OF APOSTASY

Jude 17-19

#### *Text*

17. But ye, beloved, remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;
18. that they said to you, In the last time there shall be mockers, walking after their own ungodly lusts.
19. These are they who make separations, sensual, having not the Spirit.

*Queries*

81. In describing the people addressed in verse 17, what is common to the verse 1 description?
82. What is common in this verse with the fifth verse?
83. What, in verse 17, would make it very unlikely that the epistle of Jude was written in the second century, as some claim?
84. Do you think the quote in verse 18 was actually spoken, or could it have been written?
85. How could "in the last time" be referring to the time when the epistle was written, when nearly 2,000 years have passed and the last day has not arrived yet?
86. Explain how a person who followed after his own lusts would also be a "mockers"?
87. How many times has the word "ungodly" been used in verses 15 and 18?

*Paraphrases*

- A. 17. But you, dear brethren, are different; for you remember the words which you hear the Lord's apostles speak,
  18. When they told us, as they habitually spoke, that there would be fools who would make a mock of sin during the Christian days, having as the object of their desires ungodly sensuousness.
  19. These are the ones whose conduct destroys unity and fellowship, for they are governed by the natural body rather than the Spirit of Christ.
- B.\*17. Dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ told you,
  18. That in the last times there would come these scoffers whose whole purpose in life is to enjoy themselves in every evil way imaginable.
  19. They stir up arguments; they love the evil things of the world; they do not have the Holy Spirit living in them.

*Summary*

The apostles also prophesied concerning these, as you recall.

Once again a strong denunciation of the libertines is preceded by an appeal to prophecy. This time, the prophets are the New Testament apostles. "Remember the words," says Jude. If the readers remembered hearing the apostles speak the words (and more than one apostle is included), then the epistle could not have been written far into the second century, nor could Jude be quoting from a book that was not completed until the second century. The fact that the readers could remember the apostles' words harmonizes with the evidence that Jude, the Lord's brother, wrote the epistle.

Some seem to see a repetition of 2 Peter 3:2,3 in this passage. The two passages are not parallel, however. Peter does not indicate that the apostles' words were spoken, but Jude does so indicate. What they mock in each case is entirely different. With Peter, they are scoffing at the second coming of Christ. These apostates in Jude are mocking God's dealing with themselves and the surrendered life and conditionalities of the gospel. Note also the different verbs used.

Paul also warned against apostasy in I Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-9; and Acts 20:29,30. Jesus also prophesied of the seducers in Mark 13:22, 23, as Peter reminds us in the 2 Peter passage. These all prophesied of apostasy to come whereas Jude writes that it has come. Although this seems to date Jude after 2 Peter, it is probably not very long after. The warnings are too similar in content and expression.

The content of the apostles' prophecy again pinpoints the men whom he describes. These men make a mock of sin, and without shame follow their own ungodly lusts. In mocking the reality of sin, they also mock God and His righteousness.

The phrase "in the last time" may give some difficulty, but it need not. The last days were ushered in with the coming of Christ, and that "great and notable day of the Lord" the day of salvation, actually begun on the day of Pentecost. Paul writes to believers upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (I Cor. 10:11). God has spoken to us "at the end of these days." (Heb. 1:2)

In this connection we might also note Heb. 9:26; I Peter 1:5, 20; and I John 2:18.

All history looked forward to the coming of Christ. All redemptive prophecy looked forward to that great and notable day when salvation would be offered, and the writer of Acts says, "This is it!" The two thousand years since Christ have been an unfolding of that

great and notable day, wherein the Spirit and the bride say, "come."

These are the men prophesied against. These are the sensual, who have not the Spirit. Who have not *what* spirit? Some think the spirit of man is intended. Thus, these are the men who walk after their bodies but who have no spirit of a man. Although this is a possible meaning, the point seems somewhat strained.

More proper, it would seem, these are the men who walk after their physical desires, but who have not the Spirit of Christ. They do certainly have *some* spirit, as does every man (I John 4:6); but the Spirit of Christ is not to have sensuousness as a goal. The meaning could also be that these men walk after sensuality but have not the Holy Spirit. The implied fact is the same: they are not Christians!

Added information about them is here given. They "separate themselves." It is not as though they walked away from the brethren. They are still in the presence of the church, preying upon them. They are separated by their choice of desire. They want the ungodly lusts, and strive for sensuality. Thus the Holy Spirit is quenched and cannot remain with them. Their spirit is far removed from the Spirit of Christ, and so they are separated from those who do have the Spirit of Christ. True unity and fellowship is based directly upon loyalty to Christ. It is a unity of spirit; His Spirit. Without the loyal life and submission to Christ there can be no real unity, and fellowship is not much more than a convenience for opportunists.

Apostasy is a growing canker. One of its immediate results is division among the brethren. This division will jet, if the apostasy continues, into a schism. A fault will then exist across the brotherhood of saints, and will deepen and widen until finally no bridge is possible. Then heresy follows, and a new body loyal to an apostate doctrine is the result. Thus apostasy has again and again split the church of the living God until the final result has been a tangled web of feuding denominations. The only way out is to go back to the author and finisher of our salvation, Jesus Christ. With a new heart surrendered to Him each man can search the holy word of God afresh; and allow his brother the same privilege. Allowing that God is the judge, man could through submission to Him find unity in Him, if he would.

*A BELIEVER WHO GUARDS HIMSELF BY  
BUILDING UP A GROWING FAITH*

Jude 20-23

*Text*

20. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,
21. keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.
22. And on some have mercy, who are in doubt;
23. and some save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

*Queries*

88. Who is responsible for having faith according to verse twenty?
89. What does the word "building" infer as to the speed of attaining a full strength Christian life?
90. Who is the object of faith in verse twenty, i.e. belief in *whom*?
91. What does the Holy Spirit have to do with our prayers? (See Romans 8:26,27).
92. Notice also who is responsible for keeping ourselves in the love of God in verse twenty one. In this sense, who protects us from *outside* interference with the love of God? (See Romans 8:37-39).
93. By mercy out of the love of God we will receive eternal life in only one way in verse 21. What is that way?
94. The "some" of verse twenty-three refers to what people?
95. Who is in doubt, and what do they doubt?
96. What is the fire out of which we snatch some?
97. Notice that hate is involved with the Christian where there is such apostasy. What does the Christian hate?

*Paraphrases*

- A. 20. Finally, beloved brethren, see to it that you grow in trusting the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, praying to God as a Spirit-filled person.

VERSES TWENTY THRU TWENTY - THREE vs. 20-23

21. See to it that you do not walk out on the love of God, but that you keep your eye upon the eternal life offered through the mercy of Jesus Christ.
  22. Have pity on some of these wayward brethren, for when they separate themselves from you they really doubt that this is the right thing to do.
  23. Some of these souls can be saved from eternal damnation; but walk in fear, brethren, for the things they do are rotten and against God, and the Christian should hate every expression of sin.
- B.\*20. But you, dear friends, must build up your lives ever more strongly upon the foundation of our holy faith, learning to pray in the power and strength of the Holy Spirit.
21. Stay always within the boundaries where God's love can reach and bless you. Wait patiently for the eternal life that our Lord Jesus Christ in His mercy is going to give you.
  22. Try to help those who argue against you. Be merciful to those who doubt.
  23. Save some by snatching them as from the very flames of hell itself. And as for others, help them to find the Lord by being kind to them, but fear the possibility of being pulled along into their sins. Hate every trace of their sin while being merciful to the them as sinners.

*Summary*

Beloved, see to it that you grow in Christ while you walk carefully among these apostates, though some of them may be brought back to Jesus.

*Comment*

With a final appeal, Jude turns to the sincere brethren. Out of a deep love he has written to them, and now with a burning heart he urges them to build up their faith. Some may read this, as other scriptures they so read, that there is virtue in faith itself. Not so. Most all men believe something, yet most men are on the broad road that leads to destruction. The most holy faith certainly places the faith in the proper scriptural object: Jesus Christ. The heart of the gospel and the object of our faith is many places set forth

as Christ. There is no need that a reminder be made of this at every mention of the word *faith*. We do not build our lives on confidence; but on Christ, in whom we have confidence.

"Praying in the Holy Spirit" is an unusual expression. To determine the meaning we should let other scriptures do the interpreting. Nowhere are we instructed, or do we have the example, to pray *to* the Holy Spirit. This, then, is not the meaning. Nor do we have any teaching nor example that would indicate that the Holy Spirit completely submerges us and overwhelms our will to enable us to pray. Likewise the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not linked with our ability to pray.

What can the expression mean? Romans 8:26,27 says "And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." And so we do have specific instruction as to the part the Holy Spirit has in our prayers. Because we are saved, and have the first-fruits of the Spirit, and have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, then the Spirit intercedes on our behalf, interpreting our very will, before God. This is especially beneficial when we are unable to frame our heart's desires with the proper words.

It may be said that we are to pray to God as Spirit filled Christians; and not as these libertines who follow sensuousness and have not the Spirit. "Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which He gave us." (I John 3:24) We know the Spirit of God because of the confession made with the lips and with the life. (I John 4:2-6). John also adds that "this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him." (5:14-15).

We might also note a linking of the God, the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit in this section. We pray in the "Holy Spirit," we keep ourselves in the love of "God," and we look for mercy of our Lord "Jesus Christ." All have a part in our being kept for heaven, and all fulfill their parts with unexcelled flawlessness.

There is a fourth party to our being kept, however. This party is ourselves. Our decision to stay with Him and to remain in His fold



is not so flawless. And so we have the careful admonition to "build up yourselves," to "keep yourselves," and to "look for the mercy." These are all admonitions that demand our active participation. We can by default or by choice neglect the object of our faith and so drift away from Him. (Hebrews 2:1). We can choose to go out from among the brethren. We can choose the way of apostasy, as Jude has so carefully warned. Even here he urges, with a burning heart, that we work with these apostates with fear; for a danger is involved!

Finally, we are admonished to hate. Sin is the mortal enemy. The wages of sin is death. Sin caused the death of Christ, and of every man. Sin made these apostates what they are, and can overthrow the Christian if he will not keep himself in Christ.

The particular sin of these apostates is the love of the flesh. Their danger is in the spread of lust to the saint. So it is the saint should hate the fleshly lusts, and even more, hate even the garment spotted by the flesh. The lust of the flesh is a possibility within every man and woman who is yet alive on this earth. The Christian is no exception, for he still resides in a body of flesh. Therefore "have mercy with fear," says Jude.

If only the saints of God could realize the terrible result of sin, they would then hate every aspect of sin. The world is not just spotted with sin, it is engulfed in the crimson tide. In the most protected situation, such as the Christian home, or the church of Jesus Christ, there are still spots of sin. These spots must be seen in their true light, and hated, and resisted.

### *CONCLUSION: A BELIEVER GUARDED SECURELY IN THE STATE OF HIS CHOICE*

Jude 24-25

*Text*

24. Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy,
25. to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen.

*Queries*

98. Since God is able to keep us from falling, does this imply that God will keep us from rejecting Him and from choosing to wallow in sin again?
99. In what sense will God keep us from falling? (see question 91)
100. What does it mean to be presented before God *faultless*?
101. Analyze all the equalities of God that are mentioned in verse 25. (Do not neglect the very last phrase).

*Paraphrases*

- A. 24. Now we conclude by pointing to the one who is able to keep you from stumbling in sin, if you so wish to be kept. He will honor your choice of grace by receiving you in His holy presence without any spot of sin. Oh, what joy!
25. To Him who is the *only* God and Savior, through no other way except through our Lord Jesus, who is the Christ; belongs His excelling regal dignity, His mighty strength and rule, throughout all eternity beyond time itself.
- B.\*24. And now—glory to Him Who alone is God, Who saves us
25. through Jesus Christ our Lord; yes, splendor and majesty, all power and authority are His from the beginning; His they are and His they evermore will be. And He is able to keep you from slipping and falling away, and to bring you, sinless and perfect, into His glorious presence with mighty shouts of everlasting joy. AMEN.

*Summary*

In conclusion let us look to our only God who saves us through Jesus, and give Him His proper place in our life and praise. Amen.

*Comment*

How fitting that the conclusion would take the reader back to facts concerning God and His salvation through Christ, for these are the very facts attacked by the loose-living libertines. These libertines are evidently the forerunners of the Gnostic element within the church, for by their loose example the Gnostics were enabled to

infiltrate the church with their particular brand of apostasy during the second century.

There is only one God, contrary to the brand of apostasy developed by the Gnostics. Jesus *is* the Christ, again contrary to the Gnostic heresy. All perfection, rule, power, and majesty belong to Him, and not to any so-called "superior" god, nor to any sect or privileged group.

This God has ordained to redeem us through Jesus Christ, and no other. He will present us faultless, without any spot or wrinkle of sin, because we are washed in the blood of Jesus and only for this reason. The saints will be put in the full view of His glory and will rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. (I Pet. 1:8).

He not only legally absolves us from blame, but He presents us faultless. We are made internally pure and eternally unblemished. To such a one we can only marvel in His wisdom, and glorify His majesty, and submit to His dominion, and be eternally thankful for His keeping power.

What a conclusion to an exhortation to contend earnestly for the faith! In an age as today, when atheism is the byword in public education, where the fear and worship of God are prohibited, when philosophers and men of "science" openly ridicule the idea of God, when sensuousness has become a way of life so common it is seldom noticed; here and now, our God is able and willing to keep us spotless and pure in Him through Jesus Christ our Lord. God help us also to be willing!

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

### SPECIAL STUDY

#### PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

(1)

#### WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

*He is God.*

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all ONE GOD!

(Deut. 4:4). (1 Cor. 2:1-2) Matt. 28:19; 1 Jno. 5:6-12;  
2 Cor. 13:14; Jno. 1:1, 16.

To blaspheme the Holy Spirit is to blaspheme God! Matt. 12:  
31-32, Acts 5:4

He had a part in the creation. Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13; Psalm  
104:30

(2)

*He is a person.*

Personal Characteristics:

- (a) a mind. Rom 8:27
- (b) affection Rom. 15:30
- (c) a will. I Cor. 12:11
- (d) can be vexed. Isa. 63:10
- (e) can be resisted. Acts 7:51

The work of a Person:

- (a) He Speaks. John 16:13
- (b) He teaches. John 14:26

The suffering of a Person:

- (a) Grieves. Eph. 4:30
- (b) can be blasphemed Matt. 12:31-32
- (c) can be lied to. Acts. 5:3

*He is . . . .*

*a person . . . .*

*a part of the Godhead . . . .*

*a Divine Being!*

#### II. WHAT IS THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

(1) Primary task: *The Revealer.*

- (a) Revealed God's will in Old Test. Acts. 4:24-36; 2 Pet. 1:21
- (b) Revealed truth of New Testament. John 16:12-15; John  
14:26

## SPECIAL STUDY

- (c) Revealed God's will by guidance. Acts 8:29; Acts. 16:6
- (d) Revealed by bearing witness to God's truth. John 15:26  
Acts 5:32; Rom 8:16, 17.

### (2) *To help the Christian.*

- (a) By comforting: The Apostles John 14:16; The Church: Acts 9:31
  - (b) By helping in prayer. Rom. 8:26, 27.
- (Note He *dwells* in the Christian: Acts 5:32; 2:38; I Cor. 3:16; John 14:17; 2 Tim. 1:14; Rom. 8:9).

### (3) *To convict the world.*

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| (a) of sin.          | } John 16:8-11 (Note: this conviction is done through God's Word, the MIRROR OF THE SOUL!) |
| (b) of righteousness |  |
| (c) of judgement     |  |

### (4) *To invite the world to Christ.*

Through the Word of God, the spirit invites.

By preaching the Word of God, the Church offers the same invitation. Rev. 22:17.

## III. WHAT FOUR THINGS DID THE HOLY SPIRIT USE TO ACCOMPLISH THIS WORK?

*Ans.:*

- (1) Baptism of Holy Spirit. Purpose: Credential to open the door.
- (2) Special Spiritual Gifts. Purpose: Temporary guidance for church.
- (3) Sword of the Spirit. Purpose: Permanent guidance for church.
- (4) Gift of the Spirit. Purpose: Indwelling presence for saved.

It is the *same Spirit* that works in each of these  
four ways! I Cor. 12:4

*There is one Spirit of God! . . . the Holy Spirit.*

EPH. 4:4

Christians are ONE with that spirit—I Cor. 6:17; Rom. 8:14.

## ARE THERE OTHER SPIRITS? Yes!

Spirit of antichrist . . . I John 4:3

Spirit of Bondage . . . Rom. 8:15

Unclean Spirits . . . Matt. 12:43; Luke 11:24; Mark 1:23; 5:2.

Seducing Spirits . . . I Tim. 4:1

Spirit of Devils . . . Rev. 16:14

Spirit of whoredoms . . . Hos. 4:12; 5:4

## HOLY SPIRIT

Preverse Spirit . . . Isa. 19:14

Fool Spirit . . . Mark 4:25; Rev. 18:2

Spirit of error . . . I John 4:6

Spirit of devination . . . Acts 16:16 etc. etc.

*We must try the spirits!* I John 4:1

### IV. HOW WERE THESE FOUR THINGS RECEIVED?

(1) Baptism of Holy Spirit. Luke 24:49; Acts 2:2-4

(Given by promise to Apostles)

(2) Special Spiritual Gifts. Acts 6:6-8; 8:14-18; Rom. 1:11.

(By laying on of Apostles hands)

(3) Sword of the Spirit. Rev. 1:16.

(By those having gifts of prophesy).

(4) Gift of the Spirit. Acts. 2:38; 5:32.

(By promise after repentance and baptism).

### V. WHY WERE THESE FOUR THINGS GIVEN BY THE SPIRIT?

(1) Baptism of the Holy Spirit . . . *to furnish a credential for unlocking the door of salvation to both Jews and Gentiles.*

Matt. 16:18-19; Acts 2:14a, 10:44-48; 14:29.

(2) Special Spiritual Gifts . . . *to guide the church until the perfect New Testament had come.* I Cor. 13:8-10.

(3) Sword of the Spirit . . . *to permanently guide the Church!* 2 Tim. 3:16-17.

*To overcome the enemy of God!* Heb. 4:12. Rev. 2:16. John 16:7.

(4) Gift of the Spirit . . . *To dwell in the Christian (thus strengthening the saint, helping him to pray, proving he belongs to God, and giving him a down payment upon heaven).* Acts 5:32; 2:38.

## BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT

1. Where was the "outpouring of the spirit" first promised? Joel 2:28-30.

2. When was the promise fulfilled? Acts 2:17-18, and Acts 10:45.

3. How does "all flesh" receive the spiritual result of this out-pouring of the spirit? Acts 2:38, I Cor. 12:13.

(Note: "Pour forth my spirit upon all flesh" does not say every individual Christian will be baptized with the Holy Spirit—)

4. Who promised to send the Holy Spirit? Matt. 3:11; Luke 24:36

## SPECIAL STUDY

5. To whom was the Baptism of the Holy Spirit promised? Luke 24:33, 49
6. When was this promise fulfilled? Acts 1:4, 5; Acts 2.  
(Note: Once a promise is fulfilled, the promise is finished. A promise does not need to be fulfilled again and again, or then Christ would have need to die for us again and again).
7. In Acts 2:1, who were "with one accord in one place?" Acts 1:26
8. Since only the apostles were assembled awaiting the baptism of the Holy Spirit, when did the vast multitude assemble? Acts 2:6
9. List seven reasons why it is apparent that only the Apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.
  - (1) "They", in Acts 2:1, who were baptized with the Holy Spirit, refers to the "Apostles" in Acts 1:26.
  - (2) The promise was only to the Apostles. Luke 24:33, 49.
  - (3) Only the Apostles were told to wait for it in Jerusalem. Acts 1:1-5
  - (4) Peter stood up 'with the eleven' Acts 2:14
  - (5) All the audience was not gathered when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles. Acts 2:6
  - (6) The multitude also were amazed and marveled at what they saw. Acts 2:6-7
  - (7) The multitude did not know and had to ask the apostles what they must do to be saved. Acts 2:37
10. Who was appointed to unlock the door of salvation? Matt. 16:18-19.
11. Who preached the first sermon, thus using the "key"? Acts 2:14a.
12. To whom was the sermon preached? Acts 2:5
13. When did Peter unlock a door to another people? Acts 10:44-48.
14. Why was the baptism of the Holy Spirit given? for credentials (a sign from God): (a) for opening the door to the Jews (Acts 2:21-22a) (b) for opening the door also to the Gentiles. (Acts 11:15-18; 14:27).  
(Note: Once a door is unlocked and standing open, the keys do not have to be used everytime someone goes in or out of the doorway.)
15. What were the immediate signs (credentials) to be seen by

# HOLY SPIRIT

the Jews? Acts 2:2-4. Sound—like tornado; speech—other languages; sight—like fire.

16. What was the reaction of the multitude to these signs? Acts 2:6-7.

17. What are the five Baptisms in the New Testament?

<i>Baptism</i>	<i>Whence</i>	<i>Executor</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
John	A commandment before the cross	John Acts 1:5a	Water Acts 1:5a	Believing Jews.	Prepare for Christ. John 1:23
of Holy Spirit	A promise at Pentecost	Christ John 16:7	Holy Spirit Acts 2:4 Acts 10:45	Apostles Acts 1:26, 2:1, and Cornelius Acts 10:1	Credentials to opening of door to Jews Acts 2:21-22a and to Gentiles Acts 11:15-18
of Commission	A command to believers	child of God Matt. 28:19	Water Acts 8:36	Penitent Believers	Remission of past sins. Acts 2:38
of fire	A thirst at judgment	Christ Luke 3:16-17	Fire Rev. 20:15	Unbelievers Rev. 20:15	Punishment Rev. 20:10
of Death Mk. 10:38	Possible in this life	Persecutors	Death	Christ and some Christians	Martyrdom

18. Who was the first Gentile to hear the New Testament invitation into Christ. Acts 10:1

19. What convinced Peter that he should preach to the Gentiles. Acts 10:9-13

20. What was to convince Peter that he should also unlock this door by baptizing these Gentiles with water into Christ? Acts 10:44; 11:17-18.

21. Was Peter convinced to go ahead with the water baptism? Acts 10:47-48.

(Note: At Cornelius' house was the second time Peter had used the keys, but now that the door was open to Jews and Gentiles alike, there was no more need to unlock doors, as Jew and Gentile includes all people. Thus *the only two cases of baptism of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament* come when the Gospel door was first opened to the Jews, and first opened to the Gentiles).

22. How many baptisms are mentioned in the New Testament?



## SPECIAL STUDY

- a. Fire (for sinners—"chaff") Matt. 3:11-12.
  - b. Suffering (for martyrs, such as Jesus and some Apostles) Mk. 10:38-39.
  - c. John's (for John's disciples, before Jesus' baptism) Acts 19:1-5
  - d. Holy Spirit (As a credential for opening the door of salvation to the Jew and Gentile peoples.) Acts 2 and 10. (see also Matt. 3:16).
  - e. By water into Christ. (for Christians) Acts 2:38; 8:38.
23. How many baptisms are there for God's people today? Eph. 4:5
24. Which one of the above baptisms is this "one baptism"? Rom. 6:3-6

## SPECIAL SPIRITUAL GIFTS

*The condition:* From 30 A.D. to approx. 150 A.D. the churches grew to be many. Churches were everywhere. There were 7 in Asia Minor alone!

*The Need:* The many churches needed divine guidance. They needed instruction from God as to how to organize, how to refute error, how to combat false teachers and preachers who would destroy the church.

*God ordained that this need be met in three different ways.  
Each way filled a need at the time it was used.*

### THEY ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- (1) *Inspired Apostles.* This is the way God guided the church when it was first started. There were only 12 apostles, so when the churches grew to be many more than 12, there had to be another means of guiding the church. There were not enough apostles to go around!
- (2) *Special Spiritual Gifts.* Men in different congregations were chosen and endowed with special miraculous qualifications from God so that the Gospel could be preached in each church without mistake, and so that false teachers could be recognized. Thus the church was perfectly guided until the N.T. was completed. This system, planned by God, is called SPIRITUAL GIFTS in I Cor. 12:1.

## HOLY SPIRIT

- (3) *The New Testament*. As the New Testament was written, copies were distributed to the churches. But the last book of the New Testament was not written until nearly 100 A.D. By 150 A.D., the N.T. had been complete long enough that churches had opportunity to obtain copies of the books, and thus have in their possession "that which is perfect," the "perfect law of liberty."

SUMMARY: Thus, we might summarize God's guidance for the church;

- (1) *The beginning*, the Holy Spirit guided the church through the Apostles.
- (2) *Temporary guidance*, the Holy Spirit guided through *Spiritual Gifts*.
- (3) *Permanent guidance*, the Holy Spirit guides the church through the *New Testament*, which is the love way, the perfect law of liberty way, (I Cor. 13).

Scriptural reference about special spiritual gifts:

I Cor. Chapter 12: The gifts are listed. They are the Holy Spirit's own. All men cannot expect to have them, for a more excellent way of guidance is ordained by God.

I Cor. Chapter 13: The more excellent way (gift) is described (love). As this more excellent way became clear, the spiritual gifts would cease.

I Cor. Chapter 14: To a church where everyone wanted to use the "showey" gifts, and even the women wanted to speak, Paul gives kind but firm instructions for governing these more showey gifts until they should cease. He points out that the main purpose of the gifts was so the church could preach and teach *to be understood and the word obeyed*.

Acts 6:5-8 The Apostles endow spiritual gifts upon some deacons.

Acts 8:14-24 Simon tries to buy the Apostolic power to endow these spiritual gifts on others. This was not transferable, and not for sale!

Romans 1:11 Paul desires to give spiritual gifts to Rome. (Note: We had to do this in person. He could not send them).

*(These gifts were given by the laying on of the apostles hands. Only an apostle could impart them! See Acts 6:6-8; 8:14-24; Rom. 1:11).*

## SPECIAL STUDY

How long did the Spiritual Gifts last?

- (1) The purpose was to guide the church until the N.T. was complete.
- (2) When the Apostles died, no one was left to impart these spiritual gifts!
- (3) Paul said the spiritual gifts would cease. (I Cor. 13:8)
- (4) The guidance through the Spiritual Gifts was called "when I was a child", and "that which is in part", and "seeing in a mirror darkly", and knowing "in part". (See I Cor. 13:9-13).

\*\*\*\*\*

The temporary plan of God called Spiritual Gifts, was fourfold in purpose. These gifts (1) *qualified* the church with wisdom, knowledge and faith, they furnished a means (2) to prove their qualification, they enabled the church to do the job of (3) *preaching and teaching*, and they enabled the church to (4) *reach people* whose languages they had not learned.

THE PURPOSE	THE GIFT	HOW THE TASK IS DONE TODAY:
QUALIFIED the church.	1. <i>Wisdom</i> : The ability to reveal divine truth.	2 Tim. 3:15
	2. <i>Knowledge</i> : The ability to know what to teach and how.	Eph. 3:4
	3. <i>Faith</i> : A conviction that brought forth divine energy.	John 20:31
PROVE QUALIFICATION of church.	4. <i>Healing</i> : Divine healing of the sick. Miraculous & instantaneous.	2 Tim. 3:14-17
	5. <i>Miracles</i> : Wonders performed other than healing.	
MAIN JOB OF PREACHING AND TEACHING	6. <i>Prophecy</i> : The ability to preach and teach with no mistake.	Gal. 1:8
	7. <i>Discerning of Spirits</i> : Ability to recognize false teachers & preachers.	I John 4:1
REACH PEOPLE (Unto All the World . . .)	8. <i>Tongues</i> : The ability to speak in languages they had not learned.	*
	9. <i>Interpretation of Tongues</i> : Ability to understand languages they had not learned.	*

- \* (The Bible has been translated into over 1,000 tongues and dialects. On the average of every six weeks the Bible is translated into a new tongue or dialect. Thus, on the day of Pentecost, the Word of God was understood in 15 different languages, but today the Spirit through the New Testament speaks in over 1,000 different languages).

## HOLY SPIRIT

I Cor. 13:10 But when that which is perfect (2 Tim. 3:17, James 1:25) is come, then that which is in part (I Cor. 12:1, 31) shall be done away.

. . . and "then shall I know even as I am known." (See I John 2:21, 27).

### *The Sword of the Spirit: God's Word*

The Holy Spirit works *through the Word of God!*

To the disobedient, the Word of God is the *sword* of the Spirit, fighting your sins!

To the obedient, the Word of God promises the GIFT OF THE SPIRIT, making your life fruitful.

X—The sun is an attacker to clay, hardening and breaking it in pieces.  
The sun is a blessing to wax, softening it so it can be moulded.

Likewise:

God's Word is a sword fighting the sinful, hardening heart of clay.  
God's Word has promised a blessing of the gift of the Spirit to the softened obedient heart.

*The Sword of the Spirit* (Christian's only weapon) is the *Word of God!* Eph. 6:11-17.

This sword is the best *possible weapon*. Heb. 4:12

It comes from the mouth of God. Rev. 1:16.

It is used against those who do not repent. Rev. 2:16

It contains the fierceness and wrath of King of Kings. Rev. 19:21

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT?

A sword is used to *fight an enemy*.

The enemy of God is *sin*.

Sin has reached the heart of *every person!*

*Therefore the Sword must cut sin out of the heart of sinful man, convince him of Jesus, and warn him of the devil's hell.*

John 16:7-11

## SPECIAL STUDY

The task of the Sword: To convict (convince) the world:

- (1) of *sin* (unbelief which leads to disobedience).
- (2) of *righteousness* (Jesus Christ, the perfect savior)
- (3) of *judgment* (Eternal destruction reserved for the Devil and his angels).

In other words, the Holy Spirit, through the Sword of the Spirit (God's Word) converts sinners (convicts them of sin) in order that they may accept Jesus Christ (convince them of His righteousness) and be saved from Judgment (convicts them of the judgment).

*Obey the Sword—let it cut the sin from your life— and  
receive the gift of the Spirit.*

## THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

Blessed promise to *all Christians*. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:38.

Truly the Joel promise: "And I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh" is fulfilled. It was promised to Joel, Peter received and promised it on the day of Pentecost, and it is still true today: *All who repent and are baptized shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

**WHAT IS THIS GIFT?** The scripture answers . . . the Spirit itself, that dwells within the Christian. I Cor. 3:16.

**WHEN IS HE RECEIVED?** When we obey God's Word, which says: *Repent, and be baptized!* Acts 2:38; Acts 5:32.

(Note: He is not promised after "praying through" nor after begging God for Him . . . but only is he promised when we *obey God's Word!*)

**WHY IS HE GIVEN TO US?**

- (1) To strengthen us. Eph. 3:16-19.
- (2) To give us an "earnest" (down payment) 2 Cor. 1:21-22, Rom. 8:11
- (3) To help us pray. Rom. 8:26-27.
- (4) Proves we are God's. Rom. 8:9.

How does he do this? By assuring us of salvation Rom 8:12-17. i.e. How can I tell He is in me?

## HOLY SPIRIT

### SWORD OF THE SPIRIT      THE SPIRIT IN OUR HEARTS AGREEMENT

(When these two agree, we know we are God's)

I Cor. 6:17; Rom. 8:14

*There is one Spirit* Eph. 4:4, *The Spirit dwells in us* I Cor. FSVT

(He does not just come to us for a moment in Church service, but is with all Saints constantly!)

*HOW CAN OTHER MEN TELL WHEN HE IS IN ME?* "Ye shall know them by their fruits" Matt. 7:16

WHAT ARE THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT? Gal. 5:22-24

<i>Love</i>	<i>Goodness</i>
<i>Joy</i>	<i>Faith</i>
<i>Peace</i>	<i>Meekness</i>
<i>Longsuffering</i>	<i>Temperance</i> (Self-control)
<i>Gentleness</i>	

(Note: The first gift listed is "Love", that which Paul said in I Cor. 13 would out-last all the special gifts listed in Chap. 12. *Only one of the special spiritual gifts* listed in I Cor. 12 are listed here! Also notice that the last gift is "Self-control". One with God's spirit will control himself, and not jump around "out of control").

*HOW WILL I ACT WHEN I AM FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT?*  
Eph. 5:15-21.

### SIN AGAINST THE SPIRIT

The promise to all flesh: Joel 2:23; Ez. 36:27

The fulfillment of the promise: Acts 2:16-17.

How we receive the Spirit: Acts 2:38

Where the Spirit dwells (fulfillment of Ez. 36:27): Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 3:16 and John 14:7) I Cor. 6:19; 2 Tim. 1:14.

What the Spirit does within us:

1. Strengthens us. Eph. 3:16-19
2. Gives us the down payment on heaven. 2 Cor. 1:21-22; Rom. 8:11

## SPECIAL STUDY

3. Helps us to pray. Rom. 8:26-27

4. Proves we are God's. Rom. 8:9

(By assuring us of salvation. Rom. 8:12-17)

Thus: We would harm the Spirit which dwells within us, we would lose the strength He gives us; we would lose the joy we have as an "earnest" (down payment), our prayer life would be hindered, and we would even lose our certainty of salvation!

### HOW CAN WE HARM THE HOLY SPIRIT WHICH DWELLS WITHIN US?

1. Grieving the Holy Spirit. Eph. 4:30-32 (see also Isa. 63:10)

- A. Bitterness
- B. Wrath and anger
- C. Clamour
- D. Evil Speaking
- E. Malice
- F. Unkindness
- G. Hard-hearted
- H. Unforgiving

2. Quenching the Holy Spirit. I Thes. 5:19.

A. Doing despite unto the Spirit of *grace*. Heb. 10:29

3. Lying to the Holy Ghost. Acts 7:51

4. Blasphemy. Matt. 12:31; Mark 3:29

A. The spirit can give up Gen. 6:3, as He did with Ephraim (Hos. 4:17)

B. When the Spirit gives up, a man cannot believe (John 12:39)

C. This sin grows gradually . not a sudden slip of the lip! (i.e. the Pharisees of Matt. 12:22-31) (A condition of the heart)

D. It is *attributing the works of God to the Devil* . . . thus we would never be saved, since we accept not the works of God.

E. It is also *attributing the works of the Devil to God* . . . thus we would, as Christians, enter into a life of *willful sinning* . . . (see Heb. 10:26 ff)

F. Resisting the invitation of the Spirit and the Bride can lead to the unpardonable sin! Such a one would eventually view his sinful state as a condition of righteousness, and he would no longer see his need of a Savior!

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