

James

Introduction:

- James was the oldest half-brother of Jesus (Mk. 6:3; Mt. 13:55) He was the full brother of Jude, who wrote the book of Jude.
- James was an unbeliever prior to the resurrection (Jn. 7:3-10)
- Christ then appeared to him (I Cor. 15:7). He later appears in the upper room awaiting Pentecost (Acts 1:14)
- He becomes the first pastor of the Jerusalem church. (Acts 12:17; 15:13; Gal. 2:1,9,10,12)
- His epistle is perhaps the earliest in the New Test., dated around A.D. 45. The synagogue rather than the church is mentioned as the place of meeting. It was written when the church was still in the circle of Judaism.
- It is the most Jewish book in the New Test.
- It is considered the proverbs of the New Test.
- It was said of James that, “He was known as an unusually good man, and was surnamed “the Just” by his countrymen. It is said that he spent so much time on his knees in prayer that they became hard and callous like a camel’s knees. He is thought to have been married. (I Cor. 9:5)
- Like Jude, James does not “pull his rank” by pointing out the physical relationship between himself and Christ. He simply refers to himself as “a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (1:1)
- The Greek language of James is of the highest quality.
- There are only four Old Testament direct quotes, but at least 53 Old Test. references in the epistle.
- James, like Jesus, loved to use Old Test. Characters and the realm of nature as illustrations.
- Some believe that there is a contradiction between James and Paul. James says: “Ye see, then, that by works a man is justified, and not faith only (2:24) Paul says: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and not of yourselves, it is the gift of God – not of works least any man should boast.”

There is not contradiction here:

Paul speaks of justification before God

James speaks of justification before men.

Paul says we are justified by faith
James says we are justified for works
Paul is interested in the root of justification
James is concerned with the fruit of justification
John Calvin said, "Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone."

- Tradition says that shortly before Jerusalem was destroyed, when many Jews were accepting Christ, Annas the high priest assembled the Sanhedrin and commanded James publicly to renounce Christ as Israel's Messiah. Upon his refusal, he was thrown from the pinnacle of the temple and stoned to death as he lay dying from the fall.
- The word "perfect" is found a number of times in the book of James. It is from the Greek word *teleios*, meaning "mature." This word will be used in developing outline for James.

I. **Suffering Makes a mature man** (1:1-20)

a. **The sources of suffering:**

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into various trials" (1:2)

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation" (1:12)

- i. **Trial Sufferings:** These are allowed by God and are sent to bring out the best in us.

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." (Gen 22:1,2)

"And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no." (Deut 8:2)

"And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not." (Ex. 20:20)

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:" (I Pet 1:6)

- ii. **Temptation Sufferings:** These come from the devil (using the world and flesh) and are sent to bring out the worst in us.

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.” (Jam 1:13-14)

It may be said that both trials and temptations are often opposite sides of the same coin. This is to say that both God and Satan may be working in the life of a believer through the same event, one to purify him, the other to pervert him.

B. The Characteristics of suffering:

1. They are often sudden: “When ye fall...” (1:2)
2. They are certain: James says when ye fall, not, if ye fall!
3. They are sorted: “into divers (Various) trials.” These are financial, physical, spiritual, mental, and social trials.

C. The Purpose of suffering:

Why does God cause or allow suffering to come into our lives?

1. Because suffering produces endurance down here.
“Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” (V 3,4)
2. Because suffering promises rewards up there.

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.” (1:12)

D. The attitude in suffering:

How does the believer respond in these trials?

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;” (1:2)

II. Scripture Study makes a mature man (V17,18, 21-25)

Four truths:

1. The Father has given us the old Book:

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” (1:17)

2. The old Book has given us the new birth.

“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.... Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.” (1:18,21)

3. The believer is to read it carefully.

“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.” (1:25)

4. The believer is to heed it carefully.

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” (1:22)

III. **Sincerity makes a mature man** (2:1-13)

a. The root of insincerity (1-8) The basis to this is partially to the rich.

“For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?” (2:2-4)

b. The fruit of insincerity (2:9-13)

“But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. (2:9-10)

IV. **Christian Service makes a mature man** (2:14-26)

a. The problem:

These verses, as has already been pointed out in the introduction, have caused some concern among Christians. Does James here really contradict Paul in matters of Justification?

b. The Proof:

“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?... Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?... Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” (2:14, 17-20, 24)

These verses are not meant to be saving texts, but sign texts. The only test of man's salvation is in his works.. A silent believer may be a saint before God, but he remains a sinner before men until he walks and talks the talk of Christian service.

C. The Pattern:

James uses 2 Old Test. People to illustrate his point.

1. Abraham: “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar” (2:21)

Abraham was justified before God at the age of 85 (Gen 15:16) and before men at the age of 137 (Gen 22:1-14) Works followed faith

2. Rahab: “Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? (2:25)

Rahab's salvation is recorded in Joshua 2:1-14 and her works in Joshua 2:15,16)

Dr. Charles Ryrie writes “Unproductive faith cannot save, because it is not genuine faith. Faith and works are like a two-coupon ticket to heaven. The coupon of works is not good for passage, and the coupon of faith is not valid if detached from works.”

V. **Sound speech makes for a mature man** (3:1-18; 1:26, 27)

A. The importance of the tongue:

says, he “For we all stumble in many ways. If any one does not stumble in what he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well” (3:2) (NAS)

Taken in the proper context, this is one of the most profound and far-reaching statements in the entire Bible.

B. Illustrations of the tongue:

1. Our tongues direct us as a horse is guided by the bit in his mouth.
2. Our tongues direct us as a ship is guided by a small rudder.

It has been suggested that the body is the congregation and the tongue is its teacher.

C. The iniquity of the tongue:

is a “So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. Behold, how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! And the tongue fire...defiles the entire body, and is set on fire by hell” (3:5,6)

A fire usually has a small beginning. Here we are told that the tremendous destructive power of the tongue comes from hell itself.

D. The incorrigibility of the tongue:

tamed, “For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is and has been tamed by the human race. But no one can tame the tongue; it is restless evil and full of deadly poison. (3:7,8)

reveal Humanly speaking, the tongue simply cannot be changed. Only eternity will the frustration and agony caused by careless and hateful words.

E. The inconsistency of the tongue:

are
and
forth at
olive
fresh.” (3:9-12)

“herewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and

requested the
the
the
town

An Egyptian king named Amasis once sent a sacrifice to his god and priest to send back the best and worst part of the animal. The priest sent back tongue, which organ as said, represented both demands. It has been said that Christian should live that he would not hesitate to sell his talking parrot to the gossip.

F. The instruction for the tongue:

out of a
that is
of
fruit of

“Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom... But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.” (3:13, 17, 18)

VI. **Submission to God makes a Mature Man** (4:1-17)

“Submit yourselves, therefore, to God” (V7)

A. We are to do this that we might escape:

1. The flesh (V 1-3)
2. The world (V 4-5)
3. The devil (V 6-7)

B. We are to do this that we might enjoy:

1. God's grace.

“But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” (V6)

2. God's guidance.

“Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.” (V 13-15)

3. God's goodness.

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.” (V 10)

VII **Self-sacrifice makes a mature man** (5:1-6)

VIII. **Steadfastness makes a mature man** (5:7-11)

A. An example from the past:

“Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. (V10-11)

B. An example from the present:

“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.” (V 7)

C. An example from the future:

“Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. (V 8-9)

IX. **Prayer makes a mature man** (5:12-18)

“Is any sick among you? 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: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” (V 14-16)

A. What is meant by the anointing of a sick person with oil?

1. It does not refer to the Roman Catholic belief which asserts that this prepares a dying person for death.

This practice is to restore the sick not bury them.

2. The men involved were “ the elders of the church” (V14) These were the spiritual leaders of the church.
3. the medicine involved. “anointing him with oil” (V14) The Greek word here is reference to olive oil, used as a common medicinal remedy in the ancient East (Is. 1:6; Lk. 10:34)

James E. Rosscup, has stated, “In brief, oil did have therapeutic value in ancient times as well as today, but it is best to understand it here as a symbol of God’s miraculous work in healing. That it had good medicinal effects is clear. It possessed soothing and curative value for animals, like sheep (Ps 23:5), and men (Is. 1:6). The good Samaritan in Christ’s parable applied oil to the wounds of the man he helped (Lk. 19:34). But it is not the meaning of James for various reasons. Though it was therapeutic in some cases, it would not be a cure in all sicknesses in general. Further, James does not say in verse 15 that the oil will cure the sick or even that the oil plus the prayer will make him well. Specifically, he does say that ‘the prayer of faith shall save the sick,’ and makes no claim for the oil. It is not the oil, but ‘the Lord shall raise him up.’ It is more adequate to say that the anointing is for the purpose of symbolizing the setting apart of the man to the miraculous work of God. It would be an aid to his faith by prompting a sense of expectancy. Christ applied saliva to men at times evidently to symbolize, by physical contact, the healing that God would effect. (Mk. 7:33; 8:23) There is Old Test.

Support for the idea that the anointing could signify the setting apart of the man to God for His will and operation. There are numerous applications of oil , not to cure but to set apart or identify things or persons with God in some sense. Jacob anointed the stone at Bethel. (Gen 28:18) It was a ceremonial custom later to anoint priests (Ex. 29:7) and kings (I Sam 10:1). This was to symbolize that they were set apart to identify with God for His will. When Jesus sent out the 12 disciples, ‘They anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them (Mk. 6:13)

B. Will all sick people be automatically healed by this action?

Is it ever God’s will for believers to experience prolonged illness?

Why are people not healed?

It is sometimes not God’s will to heal sick Christians. Suffering, if rightly understood and endured by the believer, can bring the glory of God. (I Tim 5:23; II Tim 4:20)

Sometimes sickness is a penalty for sin (Jn. 5:14)

D. What is involved in the confession of James 5:16?

James tells us that we are to confess our faults one to another.

Why?

Accountability

Receive forgiveness from our brothers and sisters

Humility

If we are humbled with a clear conscience, James then says, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (V 16) The righteous man may refer her to either the elder who prayed of the man who confesses his faults. Either way his prayers make a difference.

X. **Soul winning makes for a mature man**

“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. (V19-20)