



A Course

In

**JAMES, STUDIES
IN**

Prepared by the
Committee on Religious Education
of the
American Bible College

Pineland, Florida 33945

A COURSE

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STUDIES IN JAMES

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The compiler of this course is using by permission, *GALATIANS, A COMMENTARY*, by Dr. Earl White, Ph.D., D.D.

Although the American Bible College believes the King James Version is the preserved Word of God, this method of study allows the writer to occasionally condense a passage in his own paraphrase.

However, in so doing, these authors will quote various translations, Hebrew renderings and often use their own translations. Although the American Bible College believes the King James Version is the preserved Word of God, this method of study allows the writer to occasionally condense a passage in his own paraphrase. This should not be construed to imply that the A. B. C. is correcting God's Word.

During this course the student is required to read through the entire Books of James ten times.

It is our desire that this study will be spiritually enlightening and rewarding as you understand James' history and doctrines as relevant to the Church. All references will be footnoted and bracketed.

Respectfully your servant in Christ Jesus,

Dr. Marvin W. Royse

FOREWORD

APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF THIS BOOK

James is one of the most challenging New Testament books written to Hebrew and Gentile Christians. A lifetime of study would be too short to master it. The thoughts are deep, and the student who is not willing to do prolonged and patient thinking ought not to undertake the book. Each phrase and each verse is of value, and to get at the meat of this book it must be carefully broken down and analyzed into its individual phrases. Each phrase must be studied for itself and then in its relation to the other parts. Analysis is not enough. We must synthesize each phrase to see James as a whole.

Suggestions for Study

As we undertake these studies in James, our primary effort should be to familiarize ourselves with the text itself. This we may do through careful reading and rereading. Following Dr. James M. Gray in his book, *How to Master the English Bible*, we suggest the following five rules for this reading:

- (1) Read the whole book at one time, ignoring chapter and verse divisions.
- (2) Read it continuously, right through at a single sitting, without break or interruption.
- (3) Read it repeatedly, over and over again; not twice, but ten or fifteen times.
- (4) Read it independently, without consulting other people's interpretations until you have direct contact and immediate acquaintance with the book itself.
- (5) Read it prayerfully, seeking your interpretation from the Holy Spirit who is present in the subject matter and also in the heart of the devout reader.

Reading is our First step, but mere reading is not study. Having read the book, we should study it carefully and purposefully, closing the book from time to time to summarize our study. We will use as our guide in this study the comments of Dr. Earl White, a recognized Bible scholar. Additional books should be consulted where available, and a comparative study made of the different interpretations.

Some Values to Be Sought

Closely connected with our purpose in reading and with the problems that we face are the values that we seek. First, we want a working knowledge of the *content* of the book of James. Then, we want to know its *aims* and *purport*. Finally, we want to lay hold of the message of the book both for its original writing and its present century readers. The final test of value will be not how much of the text we have mastered, but how much Christ has mastered our lives through these *Studies in James*.

critically ill or injured person and prays for his recovery and salvation].

[Justification in classical Greek “was a forensic term equivalent to acquittal, and opposed to condemnation; in an apologetic sense it is often synonymous with vindication or freeing from unjust imputation of blame....This term, in theological usage, —Hence justification, and the remission or forgiveness of sin, relate to one and the same act of God, to one and the same privilege of His believing people (<441338>Acts 13:38, 39; <450405>Romans 4:5, 8).]. [MCCLINTOCK, VOL. IV, p. 514]

(a) Justification being an act, not of man, but of God, both the phrases “justification by faith” and “justification by works” are inexact. Justification must either be by grace or of reward. Therefore our question is, Did or did not James hold justification by grace? If he did, there is no contradiction between the apostles. Now there is not one word in James to the effect that a man can *earn* his justification by works; and this would be necessary in order to prove that he held justification of reward. Still Paul does use the expression “justified by faith” (<450501>Romans 5:1), and James the expression “justified by works, not by faith only.” Here is an apparent opposition. But, if we consider the meaning of the two apostles, we see at once that there is no contradiction either intended or possible. Paul was opposing the Judaizing party, which claimed to earn acceptance by good works, whether the works of the Mosaic law, or works of piety done by themselves. In opposition to these, Paul lays down the great truth that acceptance cannot be earned by man at all, but is the free gift of God to the Christian man, for the sake of the merits of Jesus Christ, appropriated by each individual, and made His own by the instrumentality of faith. James, on the other hand, was opposing the old Jewish tenet that to be a child of Abraham was all in all; that godliness was not necessary,

(b) With respect to <590514>James 5:14, 15, it is enough to say that the ceremony of extreme unction and the ceremony described by James differ both in their subject and in their object. The subject of extreme unction is a sick man who is about to die, and its object is not his cure. The subject of the ceremony described by James is a sick man who is not about to die, and its object is his cure, together with the spiritual benefit of absolution.

James is plainly giving directions with respect to the manner of administering one of those extraordinary gifts of the Spirit with which the Church was endowed only in the apostolic age and the age immediately succeeding the apostles.

VII. Contents. — The errors and sins against which James warns his readers are such as arose out of their situation. *Perfection*-- ◆♣●♣✠☉◆⚡❖ is a

prominent idea, and ◆♣☉●♣✠☉❖ is a frequent epithet—the “perfect work” of patience, the “perfect” gift of God, the “perfect law” of liberty or the new covenant, faith “made perfect,” and the tongue—governing man is a “perfect man.” He writes from a knowledge of their circumstances, does not set before them an ethical system for their leisurely study, but selects the vices of opinion and life to which their circumstances so markedly and so naturally exposed them. Patience is a primary inculcation, it being essential to that perfection which is his central thought. Trials develop patience, and such evils as produce trials are not to be ascribed in a spirit of fatalism to God. Spiritual life is enjoyed by believers, and is fostered by the reception, and especially by the doing of the word; and true religious service is unworldly and disinterested beneficence. Partial preferences are forbidden by the royal law—faith without works is dead-tongue and temper are to be under special guard, and under the control of wisdom—the deceits of casuistry are to be eschewed, contentious covetousness is to be avoided as one of the works of the devil, along with censorious pride. Rich oppressors are denounced, and patience is enjoined on all; the fitting exercises in times of gladness and of sickness are prescribed; the efficacy of prayer is extolled and exemplified; while the conclusion animates his readers to do for others what he has been doing for them—to convert them “from the error of their way” (see Stanley’s *Sermons and Essays on the Apostolic Age*, p. 297).

The epistle contains no allusion to the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, though they are implied. It was not the writer’s object either to discuss or defend them. It would be unwarranted, on that account, to say that Christianity had not penetrated his own spiritual life, or that he was only in a transition state between Judaism and Christianity. He might not, indeed, have the free and unnational views of Paul in presenting the Gospel. But a true Christianity is implied, and his immediate work lay in enforcing certain Christian duties, which he does in the style of the Master himself. [MCCLINTOCK, Vol. IV, pp. 29-32]

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF JAMES

by **Homer A Kent Jr.**³

I. Greeting (1:1)

II. Trials and Temptations (1:2-27)

A. The Christian's Attitude Toward Trials from Without (1:2-12)

1. He should count the experience of trials to be joy (1:2)
2. He should recognize the good results of trials (1:3-4)
3. He should ask God for wisdom to deal with trials (1:5-8)

4. Both poor and rich Christians should glory in their spiritual position (1:9-11)

5. He should look forward to the reward of successful testing (1:12)

B. The Christian's Attitude Toward Temptation from Within (1:13-27)

1. The source of sinful temptation (1:13-16)
2. The remedy for sinful temptation (1:17-18)
3. The Christian's responsibility (1:19-27)

III. Favoritism (2:1-13)

A. The Exhortation to Avoid Favoritism (2:1)

B. The Illustration from the Christian Assembly (2:2-4)

- #### C. The Argument Against Favoritism (2:5-11)
1. It is inconsistent with God's action (2:5)
 2. It is inappropriate in view of man's actions (2:6-7)
 3. It is a transgression of the royal law (2:8-11)

D. Conclusion (2:12-13)

IV. Faith and Works (2:14-26)

A. Faith Without Works Is Dead (2:14-19)

1. It brings no salvation to its possessor (2:14)
2. It gives no help to others (2:15-16)
3. It offers no evidence that it lives (2:17-19)

B. Faith That Works is True Faith (2:20-26)

1. The probing question (2:20)
2. Two biblical illustrations (2:21-25)
3. The sober conclusion (2:26)

V. Teachers and the Tongue (3:1-18)

A. The Importance of the Tongue (3:1-5a)

1. The exhortation (3:1-2)
2. The illustrations (3:3-5a)

B. The Dangers of the Tongue (3:5b-12)

1. It defiles the body (3:5b-6)
2. It is untamable by man (3:7-8)

3. It acts inconsistently (3:9-12)

C. The Proper use of the Tongue (3:13-18)

1. It communicates wisdom (3:13)
2. It may communicate earthly wisdom (3:14-16)
3. It should communicate heavenly wisdom (3:17-18)

VI. Worldliness and Strife (4:1-17)

A. The Problem (4:1-5)

1. Wars and fightings (4:1-3)
2. Friendship with the world (4:4-5)

B. The Christian's Responsibility (4:6-17)

1. Submit to God (4:6-10)
2. Avoid judging (4:11-12)
3. Stop planning without God (4:13-17)

VII. Warning to Corrupt Rich men (5:1-6)

A. The Judgment of these Rich Men (5:1-3)

1. Their coming judgment should cause them to wail now (5:1)

2. Their ill-gotten wealth is already corrupted (5:2-3a)

3. Their wealth will testify against them (5:3b)

B. The Corrupt Deeds of These Rich Men (5:4-6)

1. They withheld the wages of their farm workers (5:4)

2. They lived in luxury and wanton indulgence (5:5)

3. They condemned and killed the righteous (5:6)

VIII. Miscellaneous Exhortations (5:7-20)

A. Facing Hostility (5:7-12)

1. The exhortation (5:7a)
2. Three illustrations (5:7b-11)
3. A final caution (5:12)

B. Prayer for the Sick (5:13-18)

1. The method to be used (5:13-14)
2. The results that followed (5:15)
3. The need for confession and prayer (5:16)
4. The example of Elijah (5:17-18)

C. Converting a Sinner (5:19-20)

1. The sinner restored (5:19)
2. The benefits achieved (5:20)

³ Homer A. Kent Jr., *FAITH THAT WORKS—STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE OF JAMES*, (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI., 1986), pp. 29-32, Hereafter referred to as [KENT].

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JAMES

Dr. Broadus explains the writer of this letter to be James, the son of Joseph and Mary, and half-brother of our Lord, and views his history in the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, up to the time that he writes this letter.

Having settled as to who wrote the letter, we want to get an idea of the writer, and shall now form a connected Bible history of the man. We will take Dr. Broadus' *Harmony of the Gospels* and follow it as far as it goes.

1. <430212>John 2:12 (Harmony, p. 20), reads: "After this we went down to Capernaum, He, and His mother, and His brethren and His disciples; and there they abode not many days." Here the names of the brothers are not given, but it shows that this family of children follow that mother and go around after Jesus. That is just after Jesus worked His first miracle. In the working of the first miracle it speaks only of Jesus and His mother being present, but undoubtedly His brothers were there then. That is to say, that when He left to go to that wedding, His mother and brothers went with Him, and from that wedding they went and sojourned all together a little while in Capernaum. Jesus gets an invitation to a wedding, and in order to get Jesus they invite His mother and the more obscure members of the family.

2. <401246>Matthew 12:46-47, with <410331>Mark 3:31-32, with <420819>Luke 8:19 (Harmony, p. 59). Let us see <401246>Matthew 12:46-47: "While He was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and His brethren stood without, seeking to speak to Him. And one said unto Him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking to speak to thee." Then Mark: "And there come His mother and His brethren; and, standing without, they sent unto Him, calling Him. And a multitude was sitting about Him; and they say unto Him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee." Luke says: "And there came to Him His mother and brethren, and they could not come at Him for the crowd." It must be clearly stated as to what the object was. Here Jesus was teaching, and He was so very busy that He did not stop to eat. The report of that comes to his mother and these half-brothers of His, and they come there to arrest Him, just exactly as we would get out a writ of lunacy for any man that will work so continuously without stopping to eat. It is important to see the relation of

these brothers to Jesus as it 'is presented in the scripture. It is on that occasion that He says, resenting the interference with His work by His family, "Who is my mother and my brethren?" And waving His hand to His disciples He says, "These are my brothers. Whosoever doeth the will of my Father, the same is my mother, my brother, and my sister," placing discipleship and obedience far above any fleshly relation to Him. As later He was going to the cross a woman cried out, "Blessed is the mother that bore thee," and he said, "Yea, rather blessed is she that doeth the word of God."

3. <401355>Matthew 13:55 with <410603>Mark 6:3 (Harmony, p. 70): This is the second time that Jesus comes to Nazareth, and coming into His own country He taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished and said, "Whence hath this man wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary?" Notice what Jesus said about that: "A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." So we see that up to this time He was without honor with his own kin.

4. <430703>John 7:3 (Harmony, p. 3): "Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may behold thy works which thou doest. For no man doeth anything in secret, and himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou doest these things, manifest thyself to the world. For even His brethren did not believe on Him. Jesus therefore saith unto them, My time is not yet come; but your time is always ready... I go not up yet unto this feast." That was not a very great while before His crucifixion, and shows the attitude of His family toward him so far.

5. <461507>1 Corinthians 15:7 (Harmony, p. 229): After He arose from the dead He appeared unto His brother James. So far as the Bible teaching goes, up to the time after the resurrection when Jesus appeared to James, the very man that wrote this letter, he had not been a Christian. Hence he could not have been one of the twelve apostles.

6. <440114>Acts 1:14. When He ascended into heaven, the angel said to those who were looking at His up-going, "Why stand ye looking into heaven?" Then it is said that they went back to the upper room, Mary and his brethren. There, doubtless with the crowd, they

received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. There were 120, including the brothers.

7. <480119>Galatians 1:19 with <440927>Acts 9:27. That is Paul's first visit to Jerusalem. He says, "When I made that first visit to see Peter, I saw him, but did not see any other of the apostles, but I did see James, the brother of our Lord." [It is inferred that James was considered an apostle; although not one of the Twelve Apostles.]

He did not say that James was an apostle. Dr. Broadus and Dr. Schaff both say that the Greek and also the margin in the revision do not imply that James was an apostle; it says, "I saw no other apostle but Peter, but I saw James."

8. <441217>Acts 12:17. Peter escaped from prison and told the crowd that was praying in the house of John Mark's mother to go and tell James that he had escaped, indicating that by this time James occupied a position of authority. In other words he was pastor of the first church at Jerusalem. The apostles were not pastors; they had general work to do.

9. Acts 15, with which compare <480209>Galatians 2:9. That is the time that the great conference was held at Jerusalem concerning Paul's work as to whether the Gentiles were to be received into the kingdom of God without becoming Jews. James presided over that meeting, as the pastor of the Jerusalem church, because the man who made the trouble came from his church, and the first church at Antioch had referred this question to the church where the trouble had originated. James makes a speech on that occasion, as well as Peter, Paul and others, and James is unquestionably the author of the letter which was adopted by the church.

10. <480212>Galatians 2:12. That is after the whole matter had been settled by that conference; Paul says that, at Antioch when certain ones came from James, Peter and Barnabas began to dissimulate; they had heretofore been eating with the Gentiles.

11. <460905>1 Corinthians 9:5. That shows he was a married man.

12. <442118>Acts 21:18. That is on the occasion of Paul's last visit. James is still the pastor.

13. The last reference, except the letter itself, Jude, verse 1: "Jude, ...brother of James." Here then are thirteen references which put clearly before us the author of this letter. He was an intense Jew, very much devoted to the law and to the customs of his people.⁴

[**14.** Josephus places the martyred death of James in the year 61 A.D. when there was a Jewish uprising after the death of Festus the procurator]

⁴ B. H. Carroll, INTERPRETATION OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE, Vol. 13, JAMES, (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI., 1976) pp. 5-8.

COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF JAMES

COMMENTARY ON JAMES

JAMES CHAPTER 1

Intro: The Book of James is written to Christians whose faith was questionable because their works were not bearing witness. So we might say that the THEME of this book is: Only that faith which controls the life and cleanses the heart and inspires deeds of love and mercy can save the soul. While works do not save, faith that saves works. Our walk must tally with our talk. A verse from the book that expresses the idea of this theme is: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only" 1:22.

Now let's look at James verse by verse.

THE OPENING SALUTATION:

James 1:1

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

1. "James" is the BROTHER of the Lord Jesus. Paul calls him the Lord's brother; Gal. 1:18-19. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was also James' mother. Some references to James are: Acts 12:17; 5:12-29; 21:18-25; Gal. 1:18-19; 2:6-9. There are some passages in the New Testament that distinguish between "His brethren" and "His disciples." John 2: 12; 7:3-5; Acts 1:14.

2. "A servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" This is the author's self-identification. This indicates his spiritual relationship and says nothing of his human relationship. It also says nothing of his ecclesiastical position (Pastor of the church in Jerusalem). Someone has commented, "We find here an example of the refusal to know Christ after the flesh." James puts himself on the same plane with all other believers.

3. "A servant" In calling himself a servant, James used a common Greek term *doulos*, which means "a slave." This term emphasizes the supreme and absolute authority of the master and the entire submission of the slave. Among the Greeks, with their strong sense of personal freedom, the term carried a degrading connotation.

4. "A servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" The word "and" is the translation of the Greek conjunction *Kai*. This can be translated "even". Looking at the phrase this way, it would read, "A servant of God EVEN of the Lord Jesus Christ." This would emphasize that Jesus is God manifest in the flesh and to be the servant of Christ is to be the servant of God. It is not possible to be the servant of two different masters; Matt. 6:24. So James is certainly not making a difference in the two here; John 10:30.

5. "To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting" "The twelve tribes" is a Jewish expression to

denote the Jewish people as a whole. It also lets us know that James knew nothing of the "ten lost tribes" [as taught by British-Israelism]. But James is not speaking of the twelve tribes in general. He speaks to Jews who have trusted Christ as their Saviour and were living lives inconsistent with that profession of faith.

6. "Greeting" is the translation of one word: *Chairo*. It is a present active infinitive (inf.) and means, "To rejoice, be glad." [The Greek infinitive is a verbal-noun. It acts as a noun with verbal action and is closely connected to the adjoining verb.]

James 1:2

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

1. "My brethren" is a reference to Jewish "brothers in Christ". The instructions of the epistle would be totally inconsistent with it being written to an unsaved Jewish brother.

2. "Count it all joy" The word "count" means "To consider, deem, regard as." The words "all joy" stand at the beginning of the Greek sentence. This is in the emphatic position. It means joy in the highest degree. James is stating this as the proper attitude toward trials.

3. "When you fall" The word "fall" is *periptō* and occurs only twice elsewhere in the New Testament. In Luke 10:30 Jesus used it of a man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and "Fell among" thieves. The preposition "*peri*" (around) pictures the man as being surrounded by the thieves on all sides with no way to escape.

4. "Into divers temptations" The temptations here are like the thieves who surrounded the man Jesus tells us about in Luke 10:30. The word "divers" is manifold. Manifold means "diversity". It refers to the different kinds of temptation rather than to the number.

5. "Temptations" is the Greek "*Peiramoi*." It does not refer to the solicitation to evil, but rather, in the objective sense, of trials. The reference cannot be to inner temptations to sin, as in 1:13-14, since such experiences could not be urged as a ground for rejoicing. It refers to trials.

END OF SAMPLE