

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 27H, 2022 // BOOK OF JAMES

INTRODUCTION THE BOOK OF JAMES SAME MOMMA, DIFFERENT DADDIES

Scripture tells us that Jesus had four brothers: James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas (Matthew 13:55), and although they are not numbered or named, we also see He had sisters (Matthew 13:56).

- Though the author only identifies himself by his first name, the early church and scholars today agree that James, the half-brother of Jesus, is the author of this epistle.

TURNED FROM A DOUBTER TO A BELIEVER

James was not a Believer in the Lord during Jesus' earthly ministry (John 7:3–5) but became a follower after seeing a resurrected Jesus.

- Jesus appeared to His brother (1 Corinthians 15:7), James, then we see him among the group that gathered in the upper room awaiting the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:4).

FAITHFUL LEADER

James became a leader in the church in Jerusalem.

- James was in Jerusalem to meet with the newly converted Paul (Galatians 1:19). He was a chairman of the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:13), and is an elder of the church, referred to as a "pillar" of the church by Paul in Galatians 2:9.

A JEWISH AUDIENCE

James wrote this letter sometime in the '50s, using language that would have been familiar to Jews. His audience would have been Jewish Christians outside of Israel.

- The letter was addressed to a certain area, so it would have been to all who were spread about because of the persecution in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1).

LIFE AND DEATH

Tradition says that James had knees like that of a camel because he spent so much time on his knees in prayer.

- James was eventually martyred by the Pharisees around 62 A.D. Tradition states that he was pushed off a high point of the temple, and when the fall didn't kill him, he was stoned to death as he prayed for his attackers.

COMPLETE (JAMES 1:1–8) MORE THAN A BROTHER

James' introduction in his letter reveals a lot about his character. He did not feel as though his relationship to Jesus was something to be exploited and showed great humility in identifying himself as **"a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ."**

- **He placed Jesus as Lord over his life and was committed to serving Him.**

"CONSIDER IT A GREAT JOY..."

Considering it **"a great joy"** when we go through trials does not mean that we seek out trials or that we are to pretend in the midst of trials.

- Instead, it means we are to understand that **there is a purpose in our trials and the potential for something good in us to come out of trials.**

THE TESTING OF OUR FAITH

We are to know that **the testing of our faith produces endurance.** Our faith is tested in trials not produced by them. Faith comes through hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17), and **when trials are received with faith, it produces endurance.**

- Without faith, trials are likely to cause bitterness and discouragement.

THERE IS A PURPOSE IN THE TESTING

God wants us to **be mature and complete, lacking nothing.**

- Without the trials we face, our character would be undeveloped. God uses our trials to remove defects from an immature faith.
- **A faith that has not been tested cannot be trusted.**

WE NEED FAITH AND WISDOM TO ENDURE TRIALS

Wisdom is more than just knowledge. Knowledge is simply information, whereas wisdom is knowing how to use the information we have.

- **Faith is what helps us to stay committed to the plan during trials, and wisdom helps us to see how our trials are merged with God's plan for our lives.**

"I BELIEVE, HELP ME IN MY UNBELIEF" (MARK 9:24)

James tells us that if anyone lacks wisdom, **he should ask God in faith without doubting.** This is a doubt of God's ability or desire. This lack of faith in God shows that we have no foundation and are **"double-minded and unstable in all [our] ways."**

- The father in Mark 9:24 was not these things; he gave a statement of faith with a request for more faith because it was far from perfect.

TEMPTATION (JAMES 1:9–18)

TEMPTATIONS IN ECONOMIC STATUS

James wants both groups, the rich and the poor, to have a proper view of their trials. Regardless of the situation, both groups have temptations to overcome.

- The poor are not to be covetous but rejoice when God lifts them up. The rich are not to rejoice in their earthly treasures and develop a false sense of security.

THE CROWN OF LIFE

James then says something that sounds a lot like the Beatitudes that Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7). He says, **"blessed is the one who endures trials."**

- The promise for those who endure hardships because of their love for God is that they will receive a deeper, fuller life on earth and into eternity.

HE IS THE SOURCE OF EVERYTHING GOOD

When it comes to temptation, we are never to claim that it is God who is tempting us. Though God may send trials, He is not to blame for the evil effects of those trials.

- **God does not entice us with sin or encourage us to sin but wants to build us up by allowing trials to create holiness and stamina in us.**

NO ONE TO BLAME BUT MYSELF

God does not tempt us. Instead, **we are drawn away by our own fleshly desires**, like a fish enticed by a worm on a hook.

- **Sin begins in the heart, and conception occurs when we surrender to our sinful desires. This conception gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it produces death.**

"WE WOULD BE A KIND OF FIRSTFRUITS"

God is not responsible or to blame for human sin. Instead, **he is the source of everything that is good.**

- God displays His goodness by remaining constant. **He does not change.** His goodness is further communicated **by offering this gift of a new life to us through active faith in Jesus Christ.**

VARIOUS TRIALS

- Verse 2 says, "whenever you face various trials," not if you face various trials. The reality is that **trials are inevitable.**
- **We must focus on God in the midst of the trial or temptation, not the trial or temptation itself.**
- **We focus on what we know to be true and not how we feel.**

FOCUS ON WHO HE IS!

- **God is giving.** He is good when He gives and is equally good when He takes away.
- **God is generous.** He doesn't give the way we give, and He doesn't show favoritism.
- **God is good.** Every good thing comes from Him, and He never gives to humiliate or chastise us.
- **God is constant.** He is unchanging.