

Lesson 2

James One

The first chapter of James is unlike other New Testament epistles. There is no greeting, only a short introduction of the author in verse one. After this, James begins addressing the Christians and their various problems.

I find it interesting to note some statements found in chapter one that can be expanded and explained in more detail in the rest of the letter. It is as if chapter one serves as a “preview of coming attractions” on some subjects! Examples of this include:

Faith	1:6	2:14-26
Rich/Poor	1:9-11	5:1-9
Tongue/Speech	1:19, 26	3:2-12

As we study this first chapter of James, allow the words of truth to instruct us on how we ought to live as Christians in a world of wickedness.

James 1:1

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

How does James introduce himself? _____
_____ Name other writers
who used a similar description. _____

What does this say about James’ attitude if he be the brother of Jesus? _____

The Book Of James

On whom is James focused? _____

To whom is this epistle addressed? _____
Name other writers who addressed their epistles so generally.

James 1:2-12

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 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. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. 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.”

Why did James tell the Christians to count it a joyous thing to fall into “*divers temptations*”? _____

One commentator says, “These would include not only allurements to sin, but trials or distresses of all kinds” (*Jamieson, Fausset and Brown*, p. 484). Put simply, James 1:2-12 have reference to *outward* temptations (trials) Christians face on earth.

Therefore, if any lack wisdom (in trying to understand the source of their temptations, v. 5), who were they to ask? _____

How was this one to ask? _____

One who doubts is said to be _____.

The word “*driven*” has reference to things from without, while “*tossed*” has reference to things from within. Compare this verse to what Paul said in Ephesians 4:14. _____

What does the term “*double-minded*” mean? _____
How is a “*double-minded man*” described (Jas. 1:8)? _____
Compare the statement in James 1:8 with 1:6. What similarities do you see? _____

What makes the “*double-minded man*” unstable? _____
Why would it be that he is unstable in “*all his ways*”? _____

What does the term “*low degree*” mean in verse 9? _____
What reason might a brother of “*low degree*” have for rejoicing (Jas. 1:9)? _____

Why would the rich rejoice for being “*made low*” (v. 10)? _____

To what is the man with great possessions compared? _____
Why is this a fitting description? (hint: I Jn. 2:17) _____

Who is it that shall receive the crown of life? _____
What other writer(s) talked about the crown of life going to those who love God? _____

James 1:13-15

“*Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God*”

The Book Of James

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. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Why should one not say that he is tempted of God when tempted?
_____ When does
temptation come? _____

What is the ultimate result of temptation and sin? _____

Is it possible that one inherits sin from his parents or from Adam?

Why or why not? _____

What phrase in this text shows that one's sin is his/her personal responsibility? _____

James 1:16

"Do not err, my beloved brethren."

"Do not err, my beloved brethren" (KJV) is a valid and needed warning. Some versions record this verse as, "Do not be deceived" (ASV, ESV, GNB, ISV, RV). Others say, "Do not be led astray" (NET, LIT, YLT). These statements are not contradictory. Instead, they focus our attention in different areas. Being "deceived" is where problems begin, while "erring" or being "led astray" is where it ends! Thus, this warning is valid. In reading James 1:16, we see:

- Some had already erred or would err. Name some examples of people who fit this description. _____
- Man has a choice as to whether or not he will err from the truth.
- Christians can fall away from the Lord. Name some examples of those who fell. _____
- We need to be on our guard (I Pet. 5:8; Gal. 6:7)!

James 1:17-18

“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. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”

What does “with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” mean? _____

How are we “begotten”? _____

James 1:19-21

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”

Please read verse 19. What three things ought every man be? _____ If everyone did these things, what would be the result? _____

What does the wrath of man do (or not do)? _____ Therefore, name the things a Christian must lay aside and must receive. _____

James 1:22-25

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect

The Book Of James

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.”

What is the difference between a “hearer of the word” and a “doer of the word”? _____

What purpose does a mirror serve – physically and spiritually? _____

James 1:26-27

“If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

What can make a man’s religion vain? _____

What two things are necessary for having pure and undefiled (holy) religion? _____

Notice that “*pure religion*” demands that our duties begin first with others and then ourselves! The word “visit” in this verse means:

- “comfort ... voluntarily” (*Bengel*, Vol. 2, p. 702)
- “in sympathy and kind offices to alleviate their distresses” (*Jamieson, Fausset and Brown*, p. 486)
- “to look upon or after, to inspect, to examine with the eyes” (*Thayer’s*, #1980, p. 242).

I believe the best Biblical definition for “visit” is found in Matthew 25:31-46. In Christ’s description of the day of Judgment, those who were commended and condemned for their visitation of Christ responded by saying, “*when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and _____?*” (v. 39), and, “*Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in*

*prison, and did not _____?” (v. 44). This is the Biblical definition of the word “visit.” It means *action!**

The word “unspotted” means “unblemished ... without spot” (Strong’s). And “spotless ... free from censure, irreproachable ... free from vice, unsullied” (*Thayer’s*, #784, p. 81). It is expected that Christians are to live pure lives upon this earth (I Tim. 5:22b).

Finally, notice that the commands given in chapter one are directed toward the *individual* and not the church as a collective group. While it is clear that the work an individual does and the work of a local church overlaps at times, this chapter stresses the responsibilities an individual Christian has toward God, his fellow man, and himself!

- Jarrod M. Jacobs