

AN OUTLINED COMMENTARY ON

JAMES

BOB WINTON



**GOSPEL
BROADCASTING
NETWORK**

This material is the intellectual property of The Gospel Broadcasting Network. It is not to be altered, posted online, or printed without written permission. Questions about use can be sent to info@gbntv.org.

© 1997, 2005, 2017, 2020, 2022

Acknowledgment

These various commentaries and other Biblical studies were developed through many years of hard and close study of the Bible. I have had an insatiable appetite to learn all of God's Word possible. I grew up in the Beans Creek Community of Coffee County Tennessee. My family started attending the Lord's church at Beans Creek in 1949, where I was privileged to have sister Ethel Croft as an outstanding Bible class teacher. All seven member of my father's family were baptized into Christ, plus my wife, Marie. Each of our five children also obeyed the gospel.

Sister Croft greatly encouraged me to study the Bible and to become a good worker for the Lord. I tried not to cause her any disappointment. In 1978, after preaching for many years, the brethren at Beans Creek invited me to conduct a gospel meeting. Sister Croft, though she was in advanced years and had to drive a good distance, did not miss any of the services.

Since first becoming acquainted with the gospel more than seventy years ago, I have had the honor to hear some of the greatest gospel preachers of the time. Some of these well-known to most members of the Lord's church, but some of them labored in the shadows, learning and dispensing the truth of God quietly and effectively. Not so many people in the brotherhood today knew such preachers as Luke Gibbs and Henry Simmons. I have learned much and have been profited greatly from many gospel preachers and teachers through these many years. I am fully appreciative also to those many sound brethren who have published books which I have had the privilege to study. I began preaching in July of 1961 in Italy.

A debt of gratitude is owed by many to the instructors of Memphis School of Preaching for the tremendous work they did through the years, patiently teaching their students the wonderful word of life. I am especially grateful to these great men who were serving in this capacity during 1970-72, when I attended the school: Roy Hearn Frank Young, Richard Curry, Charles Pledge, Ray Hawk and E.L. Whitaker.

I claim no originality for all of the material presented in the material included in my books. There is no way to give proper credit to all who have contributed to the information I have learned, but in every case possible, acknowledgment is cited. I have attempted to be as accurate, clear and concise as my finite knowledge allows, but, as with all human productions, there will doubtless be imperfections. Our grasp of the infinite will of God is not absolute, despite the diligence of our efforts; there is always more to learn.

Some have incorrectly thought that my books are merely expansions of the notes I took while studying at MSOP. But those notes were skimpy at best, and were not in my possession when I wrote my material. The notes were put together in connection with Bible classes I have taught over much time. For several years, a hundred or more hours weekly were required as I prepared to teach two different Bible books each week, Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, while at the same time, during full-time work as a gospel preacher. These notes became the "Outlined Bible Commentaries" that have been made available to countless people. "Outlined" does not imply skimpy—these are full-length books.

It has not been my aim to make money through these efforts—indeed, we barely cover our expenses. Many of my books have been given away without charge to the recipients. An uncounted numbers of books and compact discs were ordered and shipped out, for which no payment was ever received. A good many of these non-paying costumers were gospel preachers. I have learned from brethren who operated Bible Bookstores that they have had the same problem. One of these brethren reported that he had to secure his supply of Bibles, in locked cases, to prevent their being stolen by preachers. How sad!

The Bible quotations in my books are from the King James Version, unless noted otherwise. These books were intentionally put on 8.5 by 11 inch pages, to make the outline format easier to view. A normal hardback book contains about 800 words per page; my pages contain twice that number of words. The spiral-bound or wire-bound books are much less expensive to produce. My wife and I have done all the manual labor required to produce the books. The supplies, software and equipment are very costly. Marie still helps as much as she can despite the dementia she has had for several years— and her many surgeries and broken bones and heartaches.

Bob Winton

June 2, 2022

bwint38@hotmail.com

(931) 728-7610 * (931) 639-0317

Contents of James

ITEM	PAGE NUMBER
INTRODUCTION	5
CHAPTER 1	12
CHAPTER 2	45
CHAPTER 3	68
CHAPTER 4	96
CHAPTER 5	132
HOW GOD ANSWERS PRAYERS	175
PRAYER	188
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP	193
BIBLIOGRAPHY	208
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	207

Introduction to James

A. Author.

1. The author identifies himself as James, but there were three prominent men in the New Testament who are known by this name.
 - a. James, the son of Zebedee and Salome, brother of John. This James was one of the apostles, the first of the apostles to suffer martyrdom.
 - 1) Matthew 4:21: "And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them."
 - 2) Mark 1:19: "And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets."
 - 3) Luke 5:10: "And so *was* also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men."
 - 4) Acts 12:1-2: "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth *his* hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword."
 - b. James the Less, the son of Alphaeus; he also was an apostle.
 - 1) Matthew 10:3: "Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus."
 - 2) Mark 3:18: "And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite."
 - 3) Luke 6:15: "Matthew and Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes."
 - 4) Acts 1:13: "And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother* of James."
 - c. James, the Lord's half-brother.
 - 1) Matthew 13:55: "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?"
 - 2) Mark 6:3: "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him."
 - 3) Galatians 1:18-19: "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother."
 2. Which James is the author?
 - a. Not James the son of Zebedee, for he was slain before this book was written (Acts 12:1-2). At the time of his death the gospel was still confined to Palestine, but the book of James was written to Christians who were scattered through the Roman Empire. "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting" (Jas. 1:1).
 - b. The author is not likely James the son of Alphaeus (James the Less) for the author did not identify himself in the book as an apostle. The authoritative nature of the epistle would have been enhanced if the author, being an apostle, had stated that fact.
 - c. James, the Lord's half-brother, is the most likely author. This is the consensus of the scholars. "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and tarried with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother" (Gal. 1:18-19, ASV). The margin of the ASV shows this James was not an apostle. He was a prominent member of the Jerusalem
-

congregation (Acts 15:13; 21:18). If Galatians 1:18-19 does refer to him as an apostle (“one sent”), it uses the term in the general sense as in reference to Barnabas, Andronicus, Junias and others (Acts 14:14; Rom. 16:7). The Twelve (plus Paul) were apostles of Christ; Barnabas and the others named were apostles of the church (i.e., sent by the church on a mission).

3. Joseph and Mary did indeed have natural children.
 - a. Matthew 12:46: "While he yet talked to the people, behold, *his* mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him."
 - b. Matthew 13:55-56: "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things?"
 - c. John 2:12: "After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days."
4. Jude (Judas) wrote the New Testament book bearing his name. James and the other half-brothers of the Lord became believers in him after the resurrection.
 - a. John 7:1-5: "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For *there is* no man *that* doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him."
 - b. Acts 1:13-14: "And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon *Zelotes*, and Judas *the brother* of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."
 - c. 1 Corinthians 15:5,7: "And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve....After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles." This James may be the Lord's half-brother.
 - d. An inspired writer's authoritative message is not based on his physical kinship to some great one, but on the fact that it is God's will.
5. The New Testament name "James" is the equivalent of the Old Testament name "Jacob."
 - a. The name means "heel catcher" or "supplanter."
 - b. In other languages, James is *Giacomo* (Italian), *Iago* (Spanish), *Hamish* (Scottish), and *Xame* (Portuguese).

B. The Purpose of the Epistle.

1. It is a practical, common-sense book giving guidance as to how to resist sin, exhortation to so live as to have the approval of Christ, and motivation to face various social problems.
2. The brethren were scattered throughout the Roman Empire, and faced a variety of problems which are addressed in the brief missive.
3. "The chief aim of the writer was to encourage those to whom he wrote to endure patiently their trials, and to eliminate from their hearts and lives those serious defects which rendered them un-Christ-like in nature" (Woods, p.19).

C. The Recipients of the Epistle.

1. It is addressed specifically to the twelve tribes scattered abroad. The question is whether "*twelve tribes*" is a reference to the physical tribes of Israel or spiritual tribes. With so many reference in the New

Testament in which Christians (and the church) are addressed as Jews, Israel, etc., this epistle was doubtless addressed to all Christians, including both Jews and Gentiles.

- a. Romans 2:28-29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God."
- b. Romans 9:6: "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel."
- c. 2 Corinthians 5:16: "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more."
- d. Galatians 3:7: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."
- e. Galatians 3:24-29: "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
- f. Galatians 6:16: "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."
- g. Matthew 19:28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The apostles were told that they would bear authority during the period of time Christ called "the regeneration" (the time during which the new birth would be in effect—the Christian Age).
 - 1) They would "reign" over the *twelve tribes of Israel*, but this could not be the literal tribes of physical Israel—they have never ruled over the nation of Israel and they never shall rule over that literal nation.
 - 2) A parallel statement is made in Luke 22:30: "That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The kingdom of Christ is the church of Christ, his spiritual body (Matt. 16:18-19; Col. 1:13-18). It is in this spiritual entity that the apostles would exercise their Spirit-given authority. This fits perfectly with the view that the twelve tribes of James 1:1 is the twelve tribes of spiritual Israel, the Lord's church—which is comprised of both Jewish and Gentile members.
 - 3) The apostles reign only in the sense that they received and communicated the Spirit-given word.
 - a) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." See also John 14:26; 15:26-27.
 - b) Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - c) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
 - d) 1 Corinthians 2:9-13: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have

entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

- e) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
 - f) 2 Corinthians 2:15-16: "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?"
 - h. From the passages listed earlier, we learn that the terms [Israel and Jew] are used in a spiritual sense; they are used in reference to Christians [whether Jew or Gentile by birth] and to the Lord's church [which includes both Jew and Gentile members].
2. The word translated *scattered abroad* [*dispersion*, ASV] is used by Peter in reference to spiritual Israel (the church): "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. 1:1-3). [The term is used in Acts 7:35 in reference to literal Jews].
- a. It is manifest that the epistle is not addressed to Jewish unbelievers. "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons...Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?...Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?" (Jas. 2:1,5,7).
 - b. He also speaks of the recipients as his brethren (1:2; 2:1; 3:1, etc.). The term is used fifteen times in the letter, an examination of which shows that his first auditors were Christians [no effort is made to identify them as either Jewish or Gentile in their origin].
 - c. It is obvious, therefore, that the epistle was written to Christians, many of whom were of Jewish descent, and were widely scattered at the time the letter was penned.
3. Some have adopted the view that James was writing only to Jewish Christians. If so, his epistle was only intended for those who lived outside of Palestine, for he addresses his remarks to the "twelve tribes scattered abroad" [the *dispersion*]; but it would be very strange that those Jewish Christians living in Palestine are specifically excluded!
- a. Some premillennialists have argued that the book of James was never intended for Gentile Christians; that the information in chapter two which speaks of justification by works simply does not apply to Christians today, and never applied to Gentile Christians when the epistle was written. This is a scheme they have developed to avoid the logical conclusion that works of obedience are required
-

before justification is obtained (Jas. 2:24; cf. Acts 2:38; 22:16).

- b. “To suppose that Jas. 2:14-26 is a polemic against Paul’s doctrine of justification is absurd. Neither Galatians nor Romans was yet written” (Scofield Bible, p.1306). Mr. Scofield would have us to believe that what James wrote is contradictory to what Paul wrote!
 - 1) His position implies that the gospel changed between the time he alleges the epistle of James was written and the time Paul penned the epistles of Romans and Galatians. He assumes that James wrote early, very soon after the church began; he further asserts that it was the first epistle to the Christians (*ibid.*). His assertions are mere speculations. Reliable evidence places the writing of *James* between the years 40 and 65 A.D. The date of *Romans* is put at 56-58 A.D. and *Galatians* at 48-57 A.D.
 - 2) The sectarians who have adopted the theory that salvation is by faith alone, without any work of obedience involved, have to stoop to ridiculous extremes to avoid the powerful truth James gives regarding the necessity of obedience. Any theory that must expunge James (or any other part of the inspired revelation) from the Bible, is a mighty poor theory!
 - 3) Martin Luther denied the inspiration of James, since he correctly perceived that James directly contradicted his theory of justification by faith only (cf. Jas. 2:24). Luther denied the inspiration and authority of James, and Scofield denied that James has application today; both would remove James from the Divine Record! This is like the lady who cut Mark 16:16 from her Bible! Any religious doctrine or practice that must destroy a part of the Bible to survive, is obviously from the devil.
- c. Woods gives an excellent comment on this matter:
 - 1) “It is to regard the phrase, ‘the twelve tribes’ as figurative, and therefore to embrace the disciples of the Lord, whatever race or nationality. In view of the disposition of the sacred writers to ignore distinctions of the flesh, and to emphasize the fact that there is no respect of persons with God; and that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free (Gal. 3:26-29), such would appear to be the more likely hypothesis.
 - 2) “This conclusion is supported by the following premises:
 - a) “*The true Jew today is the Christian*: ‘For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.’ (Rom. 2:28,29).
 - b) “*Descent from Abraham, the father of the faithful, is reckoned on the basis of obedience and not genealogy*: ‘And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be in uncircumcision, that the righteousness might be reckoned unto them; and the father of circumcision to them who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had in uncircumcision’ (Rom. 4:11,12). ‘There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed according to the promise’ (Gal. 3:28,29).
 - c) “*The True Israel of God today is the church*: ‘For they are not all Israel, that are of Israel: neither, because they are Abraham’s seed, are they all children...’ (Rom. 9:6). ‘Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham’ (Gal. 3:7). ‘And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God’ (Gal. 6:16). In Christ, all rights bestowed because of fleshly distinctions, are eliminated, and all are regarded as equal in privilege before God. ‘Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh: even

though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more' (2 Cor. 5:16).

3) "If our Lord is not now regarded thus, surely men ought not so to be" (Woods, pp.31f).

d. *"We conclude, therefore, that the book of James was written to Christians scattered throughout the world (whether of Jewish or Gentile origin), among whom were, of course, many descendants of Jacob, and that the phrase the 'twelve tribes,' because of its obvious significance of totality is a figurative representation of the true Israel of God. Fleshly Israel was scattered by the various banishments she suffered in her long history; the disciples of the Lord were 'scattered abroad' (Acts 8:4) because of persecution directed largely by Saul of Tarsus (Acts 8:1-3), and so might also be properly styled 'the Dispersion'"* (Woods, p.32).

D. The Date of the Letter, and the Location of James When it was Written.

1. It is difficult to narrow the time down much from 40-65 A.D.

a. It was not written before the giving of the name *Christian* (Acts 11:26; Jas. 2:7). This name was revealed about 40 A.D. It was written after the persecution of Acts 8 had scattered the brethren. Those addressed were facing persecution.

b. It was written at a time when there were fatherless and widows and other brethren who were in need (Jas. 1:27; 2:15-18). Persecution could cause these conditions, as well as the great famine that occurred about 44 A.D. (Acts 11:28-30), and another during the latter part of the 50s A.D.

1) James 1:27: "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."

2) James 2:15-18: "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? 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."

3) Acts 11:28-30: "And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

c. The truth and value of the message do not depend on our knowing the precise year in which it was written.

2. The epistle was probably written from Palestine, since references are included of things peculiar to that land. This is far from certain, but this information is not essential to our understanding of the epistle.

a. James 3:11-12: "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet *water* and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so *can* no fountain both yield salt water and fresh."

b. James 5:7-8: "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. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

E. Outline of James.

1. Chapter One.

a. Introductory Statement: 1:1.

b. Proper Attitude Toward the Trials of Life: 1:2-12.

c. Temptations Put in Perspective: 1:13-16.

- d. Proper Regard for God's Goodness: 1:17-18.
 - e. Proper Attitude Toward God's Word: 1:19-25.
 - f. Pure and undefiled Religion: 1:26-27.
2. Chapter Two.
- a. Proper Respect for Others: 2:1-7
 - b. The Royal Law: 2:8-13.
 - c. Faith Without Works is Dead: 2:14-26.
3. Chapter Three.
- a. The Tongue: 3:1-12.
 - b. Wisdom and Understanding: 3:13-18.
4. Chapter Four.
- a. Friendship of the World: 4:1-4.
 - b. Humility Enjoined: 4:5-12.
 - c. Presumptuous Overconfidence: 4:13-16.
 - d. The Sin of Omission: 4:17.
5. Chapter Five.
- a. Warning to the Rich: 5:1-6.
 - b. Patiently Await the Lord's Return: 5:7-11.
 - c. Swearing Forbidden: 5:12.
 - d. Power of Prayer: 5:13-18.
 - e. Converting the Erring Saint: 5:19-20.
-

JAMES 1

A. James 1:1: Introductory Statement.

1. The passage in three versions:
 - a. "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting" (KJV).
 - b. "James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings" (NKJ).
 - c. "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, greeting" (ASV).
 2. Though by birth James was the Lord's half-brother (Matt. 13:55; John 7:5; Acts 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:7; Gal. 2:9; Acts 21:18), yet he did not address the recipients from the standpoint of the physical relationship he sustained with Jesus; rather he speaks of himself as a servant of Jesus.
 - a. He demonstrates a proper and becoming modesty when he identifies himself as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. A servant is one who gives himself over to another's will. The idea of willingness is included in the word.
 - b. By refraining to call attention to his physical kinship to Jesus, he urged the acceptance of his letter on the basis of it being inspired truth rather than by the kinship factor. "And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed *is* the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11:27-28).
 - c. Christians are not to esteem themselves too highly, but not to a hurtful extreme. "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself more highly than he ought to think*; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3). We would put a severe limit on our usefulness to the Lord's work if we had no self-esteem.
 - 1) The glory belongs to the Lord, not to man. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19-20).
 - 2) Christ, who had the right to assert his rights, made himself of no reputation. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:5-7).
 - 3) Romans 15:3: "For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."
 - d. James and every other inspired man had a lofty esteem for God and Christ, and were willing servants of the Godhead.
 3. James addresses his original auditors as "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad." The expression *twelve tribes* is used of the literal tribes of physical Israel in John 7:35; in 1 Peter 1:1, it is used as a figurative reference to Christians. Here also it is used as a figurative reference to those who comprise spiritual Israel, the church. In the original usage, the term included all the Jews; in the latter case, the term includes all Christians.
 - a. James 2:1,7: "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons....Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?"
-

- b. 1 Peter 1:1: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."
 - c. Romans 2:28-29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God."
 - d. Romans 9:6: "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel."
 - e. Galatians 6:16: "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."
4. The twelve tribes James addresses had been *scattered abroad*, through the Roman Empire. When the first great persecution rocked the Lord's church, the members were scattered abroad: "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles....Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:1,4). This first great persecution scattered the Christians throughout Palestine and into the outlying cities.
5. The writer sent greetings to them. The word translated *greeting* means "joy to you." It is akin to our expression, "Cheer up!" The term [*chairō*] is also used in:
- a. Acts 15:23: "And they wrote *letters* by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren **send greeting** unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia."
 - b. Acts 23:26: "Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix *sendeth greeting*."
 - c. 2 John 10: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him **God speed**."

B. James 1:2-12: Proper Attitude Toward the Trials of Life.

1. Verse 2: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations."
- a. The first thought in his admonitions to the recipients is to identify them as his brethren. Christians are all brothers and sisters in the spiritual family of God. "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren" (Matt. 23:8).
 - 1) The Greek word *adelphoi* in our text means "fellow-believers, joined to each other in love, and constituting a single family with God as their Father. It is noteworthy that the inspired writers uniformly avoided the use of terms and designations which would establish class distinctions among the disciples. The terms used, such as disciple, believer, brother, saint, fellow-laborer, beloved brother, etc. denote characteristics, relationships, dispositions, activities, etc.; and all distinctive titles and honorary appellations were eschewed" (Woods, p.35).
 - 2) All Christians are equals, insofar as their intrinsic spiritual value is concerned. While there are marked differences in the talents individuals have, as well as the roles we fill in the kingdom, we are all equal in worth. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:28-29).
 - b. James counsels the brethren to consider it a joyful experience when they encounter various kinds of *temptations*. There are two meanings for "temptation."
 - 1) One is inward in nature; this is enticement to sin. "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. Then when lust hath

- conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:13-15).
- 2) The other is outward, having reference to trials.
 - a) 2 Timothy 3:12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
 - b) 1 Peter 4:15-16: "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."
 - c) Matthew 5:10-12: "Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."
 - c. Trials and persecutions are the common lot of Christians of every generation. We do not face the degree of hardship today, in America, that our brethren in the first century encountered, but our foes today are limited by constituted law. Undoubtedly, there are some who would subject us to physical torture and death if they were not restrained by the law.
 - d. Christianity is costly.
 - 1) It cost God his Son, and the Son his life.
 - a) John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
 - b) John 10:17-18: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."
 - 2) It costs each Christian his own selfish interests.
 - a) Luke 9:23: "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."
 - b) Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - e. There is great disagreement between God's position and Satan's. Truth and error, and godliness and ungodliness, are vastly distinctive. The church and the world are incompatible. Heaven and hell are as different as two places could ever be.
 - f. Because sinners love sin and hate having it exposed or opposed, they will hate and oppose those who live and teach the truth. Preachers who compromise the truth are popular in a worldly society, while faithful proclaimers of God's word are most usually hated, rejected and shunned. Compromisers give people a sense of spiritual well-being, using smooth, pleasing words (Isa. 30:10), while those who remain faithful to their heavenly calling must speak the whole counsel of God, which often involves reproving and rebuking, and opposing popular beliefs and practices (2 Tim. 4:2; Rom. 16:17-18).
 - 1) Isaiah 30:10: "Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 4:2: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."
 - 3) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
-

- g. The Lord warned the apostles that men would hate them since they had hated the Lord. "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also" (John 15:18-20).
- h. The apostles courageously endured persecution and refused to give in to the demands of the enemies to relent in their preaching. "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:41-42).
2. Verse 3: "Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."
- a. Patience results when our faith is tried. Patience is steadfastness and endurance. The Greek word is comprised of two words: *hupo* (under) and *meno* (to remain, to abide). Patience, therefore, is a spiritual quality that enables the individual to remain steadfast and unwavering, despite the outward pressures that may be applied.
- b. Periods of trial that come upon saints sift out the insincere and the uncommitted. Spiritual men are separated from the spiritual boys. Gideon sifted the 32,000 soldiers who came out to fight by his side. God did not want that many, so he gave Gideon some ways by which to identify the 300 men who were truly committed from the 31,700 who were not needed (Judg. 7).
- c. Those who withstand trials emerge therefrom much stronger than before. They are able to conquer future trials, and will receive an eternal reward. "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath" (Rom. 2:6-8).
- d. Those who chafe under small trials are ill-prepared for anything greater. "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and *if* in the land of peace, *wherein* thou trustedst, *they wearied thee*, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" (Jer. 12:5).
- e. Trials are sent upon us for our own good (Heb. 12:4-11). They are not intended to prove to God that we are faithful, but give us an opportunity to demonstrate that our faith is real. "The 'faith' (*pis' tis*) which trials prove is, in the New Testament, 'the conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor of faith and conjoined with it' (Thayer). It continues and exhibits the same characteristics of the faith which the alien sinner exercises and which leads him on to salvation, 'a conviction full of joyful trust, that Jesus is the Messiah—the divinely appointed author of salvation in the kingdom of God, *conjoined with obedience to Christ* (ibid.) Thus faith involves (a) unquestioned acceptance of the truth revealed regarding Christ and God; (b) full and unreserved obedience to their commands; and (3) humble and unreserved reliance on their promises. (Heb. 11:6; James 2:20-26)" (Woods, pp.37f).
3. Verse 4: "But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."
- a. We are admonished to allow patience (steadfastness, endurance) to achieve its end, accomplish the purpose for which it is intended. If patience fills its purpose, we will remain steadfast and will be spiritually mature and complete.
- b. "The word translated 'perfect' in this passage does not denote sinlessness, but completeness, wholeness, maturity. It is a term which, in classical Greek, was used of animals which had reached full growth; of scholars past the elementary period of their studies and therefore mature students; of men full-grown. In the New Testament, it is used of those who have attained to spiritual manhood in
-

Christ, to full maturity and understanding in spiritual matters, and are thus no longer babes and immature persons in Christ. It is said of our Lord that he was made ‘perfect (*teleios*) through sufferings’ (Heb. 2:10), where, of course, it cannot possibly mean that he was made sinless through suffering as if such a state did not obtain before” (Woods, p.38). A perfect saint in the sense of the text is not one who is utterly without sin; he is one who is lacking nothing in Christian character.

- 1) 1 Peter 2:20-23: "For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously."
 - 2) 2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen."
 - 3) The sense in which Christ is said (in Heb. 5:8-9) to have been made perfect is that only after his death, burial, resurrection, ascension back to heaven, and coronation as King of the kingdom, did he become the perfect Savior, fully qualified and equipped to serve in that capacity. At no time and in no way was he ever imperfect in moral and spiritual purity.
- c. *Perfect* and *entire* are not used synonymously. “We have seen that the first as used here denotes maturity, wholeness, completeness. It describes that which has accomplished its purpose, achieved its end; as, for example, a surgeon whose schooling and internship is wholly behind him and he is therefore mature in preparation. The second, *entire* (from the Greek *holokleros*), means that the thing to which it is applied has all that belongs to it, as, for example, a baby, born with all of its parts, and thus in every respect normal. It was used in ancient times of an offering without blemish; of an heir who has received the full portion of his inheritance; of the lame man who had been healed. (Acts 3:16.) Thus those whose faith is sufficiently strong to enable them to endure trial develop patience which, when allowed to reach maturity, completely equip them, leaving them ‘lacking in nothing’” (Woods, pp.38f).
4. Verse 5: “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.”
 - a. Knowledge is the possession of facts; wisdom is the ability to judge soundly and correctly regarding these facts. “Knowledge is obtained only through study; wisdom is a gift of God. One whose desire is to learn mathematical principles would not resort to prayer but to textbooks dealing therewith; one who desires the divine wisdom must get down on his knees. Facts to be stored in the head are obtained only through mental effort; the wisdom which has its home in the depths of the soul only God can bestow. Of the *manner* in which God bestows this wisdom the writer does not deal; it is [the] fact of it which is here affirmed” (Woods, pp.40f).
 - b. God gives his gifts liberally, and does so without begrudging the gift and without complaint; he does not reproach us for making a request. God does not rebuke us for having requested the same item on earlier occasions; he does not reproach us for having wasted those things he has given us in the past. It is the nature of God to give. He does not limit his gifts to only a favored few among the faithful. The gift of wisdom is available to every Christian.
 - c. How do we obtain wisdom? James simply states that its source is God and that we are to ask God for it. James does not specifically deal with how God grants us wisdom; he merely affirms that God is its source.
 - 1) Job 28:12: "But where shall wisdom be found? and where *is* the place of understanding?"
 - 2) Proverbs 9:10: "The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy
-

is understanding."

- d. Some ways by which wisdom is bestowed by the Father upon his children are obvious:
 - 1) **Through our study of his holy word.** The Bible, in effect, is the revelation of the mind and wisdom of the Almighty: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:9-13). By studying, learning, and believing the Bible, we obtain a measure of God's wisdom.
 - 2) **Through various experiences of life.** God may providentially lead us through a series of trials or of pleasant experiences; bitter or sweet, the experiences create a measure of wisdom within us. In the case of some blessed event, the wisdom gleaned is sweet; we learn that God is able to bless us, so we learn to trust him more. In the case of some difficult experience, we learn that God is able to lead us through the ordeal successfully; we learn that our full confidence can be placed on God; he will help us triumph.
 - 3) **Through teaching others** the knowledge and wisdom we have obtained from the Bible, we gain an additional degree of wisdom. We will often perceive some truth better, when we try to teach it to others.
 - e. God deals with his children as earthly parents deal with their offspring. A child might ask for some item or privilege; we know that the object requested would be dangerous to the youngster, so we decline his plea. We have given him an answer, even though it was negative. God knows what we need and what we do not need; he often answers our petition negatively, by withholding the item, but he has nevertheless answered us.
 - f. God gives his gifts liberally. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. 7:7-8).
5. Verses 6-8: "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."
 - a. Any request made in prayer to God must be offered in faith. "Faith is...much more than mere intellectual assent to the truthfulness of a proposition—belief that a statement is true—it is firm reliance upon the Lord, unwavering trust in his word, coupled with the disposition to obey fully his commands. We learn here that, in order to obtain wisdom (a) we must ask; (b) we must ask of God; (c) we must ask of God in faith; and (d) the petition must be made 'nothing doubting'" (Woods, pp.42f). While Naaman questioned the procedure given by the prophet by which he was to be cleansed of his leprosy, his disease remained with him (2 Kings 5).
 - 1) Joshua 21:45: "There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass."
 - 2) Joshua 23:14: "And, behold, this day I *am* going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, *and* not one thing hath failed thereof."
-

- 3) Hebrews 10:22: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."
 - 4) Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
 - b. One who asks but doubts the power of prayer, doubts whether God will hear his prayer, doubts whether he can answer it, and doubts that he is even willing to answer it. Further, God will neither accept nor answer the prayer of one who is engaged in sin.
 - 1) Psalms 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*."
 - 2) Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination."
 - 3) John 9:31: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth."
 - c. The one who prays with doubt is likened to a wave of the sea: it has no dependable or constant direction; it dashes first one way then another. Such a person believes enough to pray but does not believe enough to expect to be heard and answered.
 - 1) Our requests might be turned down, they might be quickly fulfilled, something better might be given, or we might have to wait before the item requested is provided. We are to be persuaded fully in our minds that God will both hear and answer; there are no unanswered prayers offered by God's sincere child.
 - 2) "We should ever strive to possess that spiritual poise which enables one to weather the winds of trial, temptation and all earthly difficulty and to exhibit that stability of heart and mind which cannot be moved" (Woods, p.43).
 - 3) We need to have an inner sense of assurance when we pray, and cultivate a good degree of confidence that our prayers will be heard and answered. "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12).
 - d. A double-minded man is a man with two minds. "The word [*dipsuchos*] occurs in no other New Testament book, and in James only here and 4:8. Inasmuch as there is no clear instance of its use before the Epistle of James was penned this has led to the conclusion that James *coined* it....A doubter is a doubleminded person and is in the position of attempting to pay homage to two masters (Matt. 6:24). He is, therefore, 'unstable,' (*akatastatos*, unsteady, wavering, in disposition and attitude). Such a person is restless, confused in his actions and in all of his ways. A double-minded man is in conflict with himself; this situation makes him *unstable*, a word used to describe a drunk man unable to walk a straight course, swaying now this way, now that, without definite direction in his course, and thus unable to get anywhere" (Woods, p.44).
 - e. Such an unstable, double-minded person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. His prayer is not in faith; it is offered as much out of doubt as from faith. Such a man is like Reuben. "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou *it*: he went up to my couch" (Gen. 49:4).
6. Verse 9: "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted."
- a. It does not matter how lowly our earthly estate may be, we are equal with all other Christians in the sight of God. Some elderships have been comprised of janitors and bank presidents. Financial or social status does not enter into Christian fellowship. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). In the first century, slaves and masters stood on equal terms in the Lord's church; the rich and the poor are
-

equals in Christ. In military congregations, buck privates and high ranking officers often worship together as brothers in Christ.

- b. Those of more humble circumstances have much about which to be grateful; they can rejoice that they have been exalted from the degradation of sin into the marvelous light of the gospel, to stand approved before God, and to join hands in fellowship with all other saints, even those who are rich and mighty in this world.
 - c. In earthly circumstances, a Christian might be poverty-stricken and outcast from society, but with God he occupies an exalted position.
 - d. A faithful, mature Christian, if suddenly enriched, is able to handle his new-found wealth for he sees riches in their true light: a means to an end, and not the end itself. "Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny *thee*, and say, Who *is* the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God *in vain*" (Prov. 30:8-9).
 - e. Philemon was a wealthy man; Onesimus was his runaway slave. Paul converted Onesimus in Rome and sent him back to his earthly master, who was now also his spiritual brother. In Christ, there was no social barrier that divided them, even though in the work place, the former relationship still pertained. "For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever; Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?" (Phile. 15-16).
7. Verses 10-11: "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."
- a. The brother of low estate had reason to rejoice in that he had been exalted in God's sight; at the same time, the rich man who obeyed the gospel had good reason to rejoice in that he had been made low. It is obvious that the rich man of the passage is a Christian, for there would have been no reason for James to have addressed worldly-minded rich men. That kind of person would not be moved to rejoice if he should lose his wealth.
 - b. In persecution, rich Christians often lost their fortunes suddenly. In such a case, remaining loyal to Christ was of greater importance to them than the loss of their wealth. Such a person might be given the choice of renouncing their faith in Christ and retaining their fortunes, or maintaining their faith and losing their fortunes. The rich Christian who retained his faith and lost his wealth had good reason to rejoice.
 - 1) Matthew 5:10-12: "Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."
 - 2) Acts 5:41: "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."
 - c. Another application of the principle of verse ten is that even the rich and mighty must humble themselves in order to enter into Christ. A story coming from the early days of the Restoration Movement in America illustrates the point. A medical doctor attended the meetings being held by a gospel preacher. For a while, he scoffed at those who responded to the invitation, tearfully repenting, and submitting to the humble action of being baptized into Christ. He stated that he would never shame himself in such a fashion. Later, when the gospel found its way into his heart, he responded to the invitation, stepping over the benches, as he made his way to the front of the meeting house, that being the shorter distance; tears streamed down his face, as he wept unashamedly over his past sins
-

and in gladness for the privilege of obeying the gospel of Christ!

- d. Humility is a small price to pay for the blessings to be received.
 - 1) Matthew 5:3: "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 6:12-17: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and *before* Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall show, *who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."
 - 3) James 4:10: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."
 - 4) 1 Peter 5:5-7: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. umble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."
 - 5) Luke 12:13-21: "And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry. But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."
 - e. Riches and those who trust in riches are temporary; they pass away. The stock market crash in 1929 led many to kill themselves at the sudden loss of wealth. One who puts trust in his riches is foolhardy; money will help its ungodly owner only as long as he possesses it and only in this life. God will not be interested in the amount of money one accumulates here, but in how obedient he was while on earth. The riches that count with God are the riches of faith and good works.
 - 1) Matthew 6:19-21: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
 - 2) Matthew 7:21-23: "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 which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - 3) Romans 14:11-12: "For it is written, *As* I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or
-

bad."

- 5) Titus 2:14: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
 - 6) Titus 3:1: "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work."
 - 7) James 2:5: "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"
- f. The flowers that appear so beautiful in the early morning, will with the heat of the sun soon wilt and die; flowers last only for a short time. James points out that the wealth of a rich man is only a temporary advantage; the wealth can be lost or spent or stolen; the rich man can grow old and die; in either case, the wealth was only a short-lived, temporary, and deceitful benefit. "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the **deceitfulness of riches**, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful" (Matt. 13:22).
- g. "James had earlier shown (verses 2-4), that the loss of riches is not to be regarded as a catastrophe; on the contrary, one experiencing this is to rejoice in it, provided that his faith is sufficiently strong to enable him to endure the trial such an experience brings. Here, he emphasizes the fact that the rich will die as do other men as surely as the grass of the field withers and dies. He, too, will 'fade away'....Man is thus like a candle which, for the moment is seen, and then is snuffed out and is no more" (Woods, p.51).
8. Verse 12: "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." "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which *the Lord* promised to them that love him" (ASV).
- a. There are blessings that attend one who endures the trials of this life. James has specific reference to the persecutions that come upon Christians because they are Christians. Everyone has to face the rigors of living in this world; there is no special blessing involved in encountering the diseases, the accidents, and the other problems attendant to living in a frail fleshly body in this world. But if we are persecuted for righteousness' sake, great blessings are in the offing for one who endures (cf. Matt. 5:10-12). A Christian, however, can also obtain strength by facing the common troubles and struggles of life.
 - 1) Matthew 5:10-12: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."
 - 2) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
 - b. There is no blessing offered to one who only endures persecution for a time, and then gives up. These temptations (trials) are those of an outward nature; they are the persecutions our brethren faced especially during the first century; they are the various difficulties and opposition we encounter as we serve Christ and because we serve him.
 - c. The saint who has been tried by persecution, remaining faithful, has the approval of God. "Under the figure of a crucible (a furnace of fire) in which ore is melted and the dross eliminated, the faithful disciple is, by his trials, enabled to have eliminated from his character the dross of life, and thus privileged to appear approved before God. Evidence of having been able successfully to pass the test is to be seen in the fact that he has, by his patience in affliction, endured. Like metal which has passed
-

through the fiery furnace, and has been cleansed of all impurity, he now possesses a character wholly unalloyed, and therefore pure" (Woods, pp.53f).

- 1) Job 23:10: "But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:5-8: And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons" (NKJ).
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:3-9: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you," Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls."
- d. When one has successfully endured these temptations (trials), the blessing pronounced is the crown of life. This crown is promised only to those who love the Lord.
- 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 2) Mark 10:30: "But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."
 - 3) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 9:25: "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."
 - 5) 2 Timothy 4:8: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
 - 6) Titus 1:2: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."
 - 7) 1 Peter 5:4: "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."
 - 8) 1 John 2:4,5, 25: He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him....And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life."
 - 9) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

C. James 1:13-16: Temptations Put in Perspective.

1. Verse 13: "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."
 - a. God is not the source of temptations (enticements) to commit sin. A significant change in the use of the word *temptation* occurs at this point. In verses 2-12, the noun form of the word is used; here the verbal form is employed. "The shift is a natural one, and to be expected. From the contemplation of those outward trials which inevitably beset men in life, it is an easy transition to the inner conflicts which are no less serious obstacles to faithfulness and piety on the part of the disciples of the Lord" (Woods, p.56). In the preceding verses, reference is to outward trials; here the writer speaks of inner enticements.
 - b. As many tend to accuse God of all hardship and trouble they face, so many want to blame sin on him. This passage refutes this charge and reveals the real source of sin—the individual's own lust. People often try to evade personal responsibility for sin in various ways.
 - 1) By blaming the offense on someone else. This is what Adam did in Genesis 3:12: "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."
 - 2) By pleading ignorance. "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:47-48).
 - 3) By charging it to their background and environment.
 - 4) By charging it to overwhelming circumstance.
 - 5) By claiming the devil made them do it.
 - 6) By calling it a mere mistake or accident that could not be avoided.
 - 7) By trying to justify it by the fact that others do the same or worse things.
 - 8) Many religionists try to place the blame for sin on God and Adam. The Calvinistic doctrines of predestination, foreordination, and original sin are based on this foul argument. James denies these doctrines by his plain affirmation.
 - 9) Some say that since God designed our bodies with certain appetites, that this makes him partly responsible for our sins. The sexual drive is a God-given appetite, but is permitted only in scriptural marriages; its abuse is fornication. God gave us the desire for food, but that does not condone gluttony. "Such reasoning is, of course, done by those who conveniently forget there is a fundamental difference between the proper *use* and *abuse* of privilege; and is grossly fallacious. Opium, for example, medicinally used, is a blessing to humanity; improperly taken into one's body it becomes a destructive and deadly poison" (Woods, pp.56f).
 - c. There is nothing in the realm of temptation that pertains to God; there is no tendency within him to do wrong; there is no inducement to urge him to sin; there is no evil passion; there is no craving on his part for power or wealth. Nothing can be presented to the mind of God that would lead him into sin.
 - d. "Neither tempteth he any man." God does not tempt man to commit sin. This is one of the most positive declarations in the Bible. He has no evil in him to offer to us; therefore, he solicits no one to sin. "Untemptable himself, because of his inherent goodness and eternal abstinence from every evil thing, he does not thrust into the lives of others that which is wholly foreign to his own" (Woods, p.58). Being utterly without evil in his life, he does not urge upon us something that is alien to his own nature.
 - 1) Habakkuk 1:13: "*Thou art* of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:

wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, *and* holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth *the man that is* more righteous than he?"

- 2) 1 John 1:5-7: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
2. Verse 14: "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."
 - a. The fountain or source of all enticement to sin is in man himself. His own lusts form the ground for every temptation. If there were no lust, there could be no temptation. Temptations come to us through three different avenues: "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the **lust of the flesh**, and the **lust of the eyes**, and the **pride of life**, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17; cf. Gen. 3:6; Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13).
 - b. If there were no objective standard, there could be no sin, and thus there could be no temptation. Sin is the violation of God's law.
 - 1) Romans 4:15: "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression."
 - 2) Romans 5:13: "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law."
 - 3) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
 - c. Because sin has its roots in man's lusts, no man can blame someone else for his sins.
 - 1) Ezekiel 18:20: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."
 - 2) Romans 14:12: "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad."
 - 4) Revelation 22:12: "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."
 - d. The first step in the process of committing sin is to be drawn away from God and personal purity. Lust is allowed to be entertained by the heart; it is permitted to roam freely in the mind.
 - 1) "It is the function of a fisherman's fly to induce the fish to forsake the safety of the rock or the weeds, and to come within reach of the hidden hook in the enticing lure. We must stay away from those places where we may be easily hooked. Christians should never go to any place where there is the possibility they may be tempted to do wrong. They should abstain from all association with those who are disposed to exercise the wrong influence over them. We should not only avoid those places and practices which we *know* to be wrong; we should shun all of *those which we do not know* to be right!" (Woods, p.59).
 - 2) We must not allow sinful thoughts, evil lusts, and wicked motives to remain in our minds. We cannot keep such from popping into our minds, but we can decide whether they are to stay. A Chinese philosopher observed that we cannot keep the birds from flying over our heads, but we can keep them from building a nest in our hair!

- e. If we can control the desire, we can control the sin that desire promotes.
- 1) We are not usually tempted to do things we dislike, but things we like (which are wrong). One aid in overcoming temptation is to cultivate a strong liking for holy things, and a strong dislike for things that are unholy.
 - 2) Psalms 119:11: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."
 - 3) Psalms 119:104: "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way."
 - 4) Proverbs 4:23: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life."
 - 5) Matthew 12:34: "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."
 - 6) Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things."
3. Verse 15: "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."
- a. When our will gives in to lust, sin is the product. "Lust,' is evil desire (*epithumia*). This desire conceives....The hapless individual, his defenses abandoned by being drawn away from them, and hooked by his evil desires, discovers that from the union of improper desire and his yielding will, a conception has occurred. The will yields to lust and when 'it hath conceived,' (*sullabousa*, second aorist active participle of *sullambano*, to conceive), the monstrous offspring is born. The lust (evil desire) thus becomes the mother of sin because the will surrendered to the desire, and suffered seduction. It should be observed that James does not affirm that sin sprang into life at the moment desire was experienced" (Woods, p.60).
 - b. The awful consequences of sin is death. Death means separation. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26). Physical death results from separation of body and spirit; spiritual death results from living in sin; we are dead to sin when we are separated from the practice of sin; we are separated from God when we live in sin; we are separated from God eternally when we are consigned to torment (the second death).
 - 1) Genesis 2:16-17: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."
 - 2) Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear."
 - 3) Revelation 20:14-15: "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
 - c. Even saints cannot avoid sin altogether. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 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. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:7-10). The sin of this passage is that done by a child of God; there is a remedy for the sins of a Christian: Repent of the sin, confess the sin, and ask for God's forgiveness of the sin. This law of pardon is for the Christian who has fallen into sin after obeying the gospel.
 - 1) Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
-

- 2) James 5:16: "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."
- 3) 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- d. The law of pardon for an alien sinner, one who went into sin when he reached the age of accountability, at which time God began holding his transgressions against him, includes faith, repentance, confession of faith, and baptism into Christ for the remission of sins.
 - 1) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 2) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 3) Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."
 - 4) Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 - 5) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, 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."
 - 6) Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
 - 7) Colossians 2:12: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."
4. Verse 16: "Do not err, my beloved brethren."
 - a. "Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren" (NKJ). James cautions his readers against allowing themselves to be deceived into thinking that God tempts us to sin; such cannot be so. But Calvinism has deceived many in this matter.
 - b. A great many warnings are issued in the Bible against being deceived. The fact that one is in Christ does not remove the possibility of being deceived, thus there are more than twenty-five hundred warnings about the possibility of apostasy in the Scriptures.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 6:9: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:33: "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 4:3-4: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."
 - 4) Galatians 6:7: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 2:11: "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."
 - 6) 2 Corinthians 11:3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."
 - 7) Hebrews 3:12-13: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in

departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

- c. James calls the recipients of the letter his beloved brethren. This shows the strong bond between the saints of the first century.
 - 1) Ephesians 4:32: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."
 - 2) 1 John 3:14-15: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."
 - 3) 1 John 5:1: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him."

D. James 1:17-18: Proper Regard for God's Goodness.

1. Verse 17: "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."
 - a. God is the source of every good gift, and he gives only good gifts. *Good* points to the fact that all his giving is good; *perfect* emphasizes the fullness and completeness of what he gives.
 - b. These gifts originate in heaven and come from God. *Above* points not to the sky or outer space, but to heaven. In the Scriptures, heaven is pictured as "up" (or above). The word *above* is from the same Greek term as "again" or "anew" in John 3:3: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born **again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
 - c. Ingratitude is too often characteristic of man, but giving is characteristic of God.
 - 1) Matthew 5:45: "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."
 - 2) Acts 14:17: "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."
 - 3) Acts 17:28: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 6:17: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."
 - d. God is described as "the Father of lights." He is the Creator [Job 38:24; 2 Cor. 1:3; Eph. 1:17] of the physical lights (sun, moon, stars). He provides spiritual and moral light. In him is no darkness (sin, error, ignorance) at all (1 John 1:5). He dwells in light unapproachable (1 Tim. 6:16).
 - 1) Job 38:24: "By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?"
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 1:3: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort."
 - 3) Ephesians 1:17: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him."
 - 4) 1 John 1:5: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."
 - 5) 1 Timothy 6:16: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."
 - e. There is no variableness with God; he is constant, dependable, and trustworthy. The sun and moon change position in relation to the earth hour by hour, and thus the shadows they cast are ever moving

and changing, but there is no such movement and change with God; he is ever steadfast. Shadows are cast and are constantly changing as the sun and moon traverse the sky, but God is immutable; he is always in light. "For I *am* the LORD, I change not..." (Mal. 3:6).

- f. "Two wonderful truths are thus affirmed of God in this section: (1) There is no admixture of evil in the goodness which he bestows; (2) no obscuring shadow ever falls over him, hiding his goodness. He is ever at the zenith; he occupies the position of the sun at high noon in the steadying and unvarying light with which he shines so benignly upon the race. It is therefore beyond belief that such a one as thus described could ever lead those who are in his image astray" (Woods, p.68).
2. Verse 18: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."
 - a. Instead of leading men into sin, God has begotten and brought forth many into the new life in Christ. God is the source of life, not of sin and death.
 - 1) "The thought runs thus: instead of regarding God as the source of temptation (and subsequent sin), he it is who willed to give us life by means of the truth. The evil offspring of sin is death. God, under the same figure (conception and birth) is a parent, too. But, how vastly different the progeny! That which is born of him possesses life. This evidences the fact that the process of conversion is not accidental or of chance; it involves the exercise of the divine will, and according to a plan previously adopted" (Woods, p.69).
 - 2) "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:11-13).
 - b. "This does not mean that the selection is arbitrary or that God wills to save only a predetermined number; on the contrary, it is his desire that all should be saved, and come to the *full* knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim. 2:4.) Provision has been made for all (John 3:16); the invitation has been extended to all (Matt. 11:28; Rev. 22:17); and, the gospel is applicable to all (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16). That there are those not saved is not a matter involving the opposition of God's will to them, but of the opposition of their own wills to God: 'And ye *will not* come unto me that ye may have life.' (John 5:40)" (Woods, p.69). "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matt. 13:15).
 - c. Neither this passage nor any other part of God's word teaches that God hand-picks those who are to receive the new birth and be saved. The individuals to be saved make the choice. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12). Those who refuse to reject ungodliness and worldly lust, or who refuse to live soberly, righteously and godly, will not be saved by God's grace. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. 3:3-5).
 - 1) In this passage from Titus, Paul has just described the awful spiritual condition of those who were in their alien sins. At that time, they were foolish, disobedient, deceived, served various lusts and pleasures, lived in malice and envy, were hateful, and hated others (verse 3). But God had love and kindness for his offspring, and provided for the salvation of mankind (verses 4-5).
 - 2) The salvation God provided was not based on works of righteousness which the saved individuals

did. Rather, it was according to (because of; as a result of) the mercy of God. Salvation originated with the mercy of God. "Mercy" [*eleos*] "is the outward manifestation of pity; it assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him who shows it" (Vine, Vol. 3, p.60).

- 3) Salvation is not gained by works of righteousness which we did ["which we did ourselves"—ASV]. This statement affirms that works of human origin cannot save anyone. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). If we could be saved by our good works, there would have been no need for the death of Christ.
 - 4) But this does not mean that human activity of every kind is excluded in the process of salvation by grace. It is manifest that God requires our obedience in certain matters which are conditions to salvation. "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35). Notice the contrast Paul draws in the verse between "works of righteousness" and "washing of regeneration" in Titus 3:5: we are not saved by the former, but we are saved by the latter. If this washing of regeneration involves some act of obedience on our part, then that action does not clash with the process of being saved by grace. The washing of regeneration is not a work of righteousness which we do. We shall see that the washing of regeneration is baptism, and therefore baptism is not a work of righteousness, contrary to the assertions of sectarians.
 - 5) When Christ approached John at the River Jordan, he requested that John baptize him. John perceived that the Lord had the guilt of no sin, therefore did not need to be baptized. But Christ persuaded him to immerse him, saying: "...Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him" (Matt. 3:15). It was the Lord's obligation to obey all the commands of God; he stated that it was incumbent upon him to be baptized; being baptized fulfilled God's righteousness. "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness" (Ps. 119:172). If he had not submitted to baptism, he would have been disobedient to God, just as some of the Jews had been: "And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7:29-30).
- d. James says that individuals are begotten and brought forth by the gospel, which is God's word of truth (John 17:17; 8:32). The gospel is planted into our minds by teaching; when it germinates, faith is produced; faith leads us to obedience; when we obey, salvation is granted.
- 1) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 2) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 4:15: "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."
 - 4) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
 - 5) 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto
-

unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

- 6) 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
- e. *Firstfruits* is a figure of speech having reference to the sheaf of firstfruits of the harvest which was offered as part of the religious activities prescribed by the Mosaic Law. The firstfruits of the harvest under the Mosaic period was God's assurance that a full harvest was in the offing.
 - 1) Leviticus 23:10: "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest."
 - 2) Deuteronomy 26:2: "That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put *it* in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name there."
- f. Those of the first century who obeyed the gospel during the first years of the Christian age were the firstfruits of a greater harvest to come as the years continued.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:20: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept." Christ was the firstfruits of those who die, with his resurrection being a pledge of the resurrection of the rest.
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 16:15: "I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints)." The ones Paul mentions were the first of many who obeyed the gospel in Achaia.
 - 3) Revelation 14:4: "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, *being* the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."
- g. "Inasmuch as it is by the word of *truth* we are brought forth into spiritual life, it is vitally important that the truth be preached, believed, and obeyed. Jesus said, 'And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.' (John 8:32.) The truth is the means to spiritual freedom; and it ought, therefore, to be preached and taught in its primitive purity without admixture of human opinion or the doctrines and commandments of men. The gospel is the hope of the world; it is the panacea of humanity's diseases, the specific for mankind's ills. It is a sad commentary on human nature that many people today prefer to listen to pleasing falsehoods rather than what to them is unpleasant truth. And, as there are always those who desire error rather than truth, so those can be found, who for a price, will supply the preaching desired" (Woods, p.72).
- h. "I charge *thee* in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables. But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:1-5, ASV).

E. James 1:19-25: Proper Attitude Toward God's Word.

1. Verses 19-20: "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." "Ye know *this*, my beloved brethren. But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (ASV).
 - a. In view of the preceding fact, the brethren are called on to follow the items cited in the verse. In the ASV, the admonition in the beginning of the verse is either an imperative ("know this") or indicative ("ye know this"). The latter is likely the point, making the statement to say: "You are well aware of the fact that we were brought forth into spiritual life by the word of truth; therefore, let your life, in word and in deed, reflect the knowledge you have gained therefrom" (Woods, p.74).
 - b. Each is to **be swift to hear**. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil" (Eccl. 5:1). Some wise adages have been developed through the years, addressing the problem of the tongue, including the following:
 - 1) "Men have two ears, and but one tongue, that they should hear more than they speak."
 - 2) "The ears are always open, ever ready to receive instruction; but the tongue is surrounded with a double row of teeth, to hedge it in and to keep it within proper bounds."
 - 3) "We may not be able to tame the tongue, but God gave us a cage to keep it in. All we need to do is keep the door shut."
 - c. The second admonition is **be slow to speak**. An empty wagon makes more noise than one which is loaded; an "empty head" makes more noise than one loaded with knowledge. "Socrates...was once approached by a young fellow who asked the ancient sage to teach him oratory. The young man rattled away at great length; and when, at last, the philosopher was able to speak, he informed the voluble fellow that he would be required to charge him a double fee. 'Why a double fee?' he asked. 'Because,' the famous teacher replied, 'I shall have to teach you two sciences; first, how to hold your tongue, and second, how to use it'" (Woods, p.75).
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 5:2: "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."
 - 2) Proverbs 10:19: "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips *is* wise."
 - 3) Proverbs 13:3: "He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: *but* he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction."
 - 4) Proverbs 14:29: "*He that is* slow to wrath *is* of great understanding: but *he that is* hasty of spirit exalteth folly."
 - 5) Proverbs 17:27: "He that hath knowledge spareth his words: *and* a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit."
 - d. The third point in the passage is **be slow to wrath**.
 - 1) Ephesians 4:26-27: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 12:20: "For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and *that* I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest *there be* debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults."
 - 3) Galatians 5:20: "Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies."
 - 4) Ephesians 4:31: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put

away from you, with all malice."

- 5) Colossians 3:8: "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."
- e. Wrath is a violent emotion that results in loss of control and makes one wholly incapable of receiving the word of truth. Many see red when the gospel or the Lord's church is named. A child of God, under the control of wrath, is sure to say or do things he will later regret. Wrath prohibits one from proper godly conduct.
- 1) Micah 6:8: "He hath showed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"
 - 2) Mark 12:29-31: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
 - 3) Colossians 4:6: "Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."
- f. The wrath of man and the righteousness of God are not compatible. Where one is present, the other is absent. Thayer defines the Greek term for righteousness as denoting "the state acceptable to God which becomes a sinner's possession through that faith by which he embraces the grace of God offered him in the expiatory death of Jesus Christ" (p.149).
- 1) Psalms 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness."
 - 2) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - 3) 1 John 2:29: "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him."
 - 4) 1 John 3:7: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."
 - 5) "Here is unmistakable evidence of the falsity of the denominational doctrine of *transferred* righteousness. It is by some alleged that in the process of conversion Christ transfers to the sinner the righteousness which he possesses, and thenceforth the sinner is clothed in the righteousness which Christ himself exhibits!....It is absurd to assume that one person is good *because* another is. True, through the merits of Christ's blood shed in our behalf, our guilt is canceled and through obedience to his will we are privileged to go free; but this is far from declaring that we thereupon become positively good in the absence of good works. There is a vast difference between (a) *not* imputing guilt (this, the Lord does for us) and (b) in conferring merit (this, the Lord does *not*) in the process of salvation....A pardoned criminal is no longer regarded as guilty of the crimes which led to his arrest and conviction, but he is thence by no means a valuable citizen with a long record of civic goodness back of him simply because he has been pardoned. Righteous is right-doing. *To be righteous, one must do right*" (Woods, pp.77f).
2. Verse 21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
- a. In view of the preceding information, James counsels his auditors to follow the dictates of this verse. We must lay aside, remove all filthy and wicked conduct. Stubborn dispositions must be changed; all

loathsome practices must be shunned. James is painting a very ugly, disgusting picture of sin. We are not apt to appreciate the full ugliness and awfulness of sin.

- 1) That it is awful is seen in the price that had to be paid for its removal—the death of Christ. Sin pollutes the soul and makes it unfit to be in God’s presence.
 - 2) "*Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?*" (Hab. 1:13).
- b. “We should be impressed with the fact that James did not seek to soften the character of sin or to obscure God’s unwavering opposition to it. There is the disposition today to dally with sin, to excuse it, to resort to euphemism in referring to it, to speak of ‘inhibitions,’ psychological weaknesses, reversions, environmental influences, hereditary factors, etc., the design of which is to render it less objectionable in the individual, and so to make sin appear to be less sinful! The New Testament writers never attempted to present the matter other than it is—filthiness and overflowing of wickedness” (Woods, p.80).
- c. “Superfluity of naughtiness” (overflowing of wickedness, ASV) is from a Greek phrase meaning “super-abundance of evil.” The expression pictures the condition of a person’s heart that is filled with evil, and which displays its true character in loathsome acts and words. The wickedness in the heart percolates to the surface, and overflows.
- d. “‘Putting away.’ (*apothemenoi*, aorist middle participle of *apotithemi*, to put off, as one removes clothing), indicates (a) in the significance of the word the act of stripping oneself completely of every evil thought and act; (b) the tense (aorist), points to a once-for-all-act to be performed before the word can accomplish its full work in the heart; and (c) the middle voice emphasizes that the *putting away* is something we must do for ourselves, since God *will* not, and others *cannot*, do it for us” (Woods, p.81).
- e. “‘Filthiness,’ (*ruparian*, that which is dirty) occurs only here in the New Testament, but a form of the word appears in the Septuagint Translation of the Old Testament in Zech. 3:3,4, where the reference is to filthy garments. There is, in the word, a suggestion of *loathsomeness*, and seems likely that it was the writer’s design to create in his readers a deep sense of abhorrence of sin, all sin, any sin. Such is God’s attitude toward such, and such should also be our attitude toward it. God regards all sin as a filthy rag, disgusting and sickening, and so should we” (Woods, p.80).
- f. Man is to receive with meekness the implanted word. The human heart must receive the word as the soil must receive the seed before any crop can be grown. The nature of the gospel is such that the heart must be soft, pliable and meek before the gospel can accomplish its intended work.
- 1) Matthew 5:3: "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
 - 2) Matthew 18:3-5: "And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me."
 - 3) Luke 8:15: "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience."
 - 4) Acts 17:11-12: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few."
- g. The word of God is powerful and effective. It is able to save our souls. James does not agree with
-

liberals and digressives who scoff at the “mere written word.” He declares that it is able to save the soul—but only if it is fully and faithfully received and practiced. The word is deposited in the heart through preaching, teaching, and studying. The word can save the soul of the alien and keep saved the soul of the saint, but only if it is obeyed.

- 1) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 1:21: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
 - 4) 1 Thessalonians 2:13: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."
 - 5) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
3. Verse 22: “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”
- a. “This is exactly the teaching of Paul in Romans 2:13; and taken together with what James would write in the second chapter, it is clear enough that this epistle was written for the purpose of correcting the abuse of Paul’s teaching regarding justification by faith” (Coffman, p.33). "For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom. 2:13). No inspired writer ever taught that justification comes by faith only.
 - b. “‘Be ye,’ (*ginesthe*, present middle imperative), means much more than simply *be*, it means ‘to exhibit yourselves as doers of the word.’ Moreover, the tense of the verb, denoting continuous action, means, ‘*keep on demonstrating* yourselves as doers of the word’” (Woods, p.84). It is not enough for the word to be implanted in the heart; it must be expressed in life.
 - c. “The word ‘doer,’ (*poietai*) derives from *poieo*, a term denoting creative action. Had James intended merely to indicate that we are to be active, the word *prasso*, to do, to act, would have sufficed. There must, however, be more than mere mechanical action to discharge the obligations inherent in the word; it denotes a type of action wherein the heart is exercised and where motivation results from such participation. It is noteworthy that from the word translated *doer* (*poitai*), comes our word *poet*. Poetry is regarded as one of the most creative fields in all literature” (Woods, p.85).
 - d. This verse forbids that we be hearers only. The Greek term was used anciently to designate those who attended lectures for the mere purpose of listening for the enjoyment involved, not for the profit the message offered (Woods). Every local church has those who attend regularly, who sit through the services, hearing the messages, but never translating the truths presented into practice.
 - 1) Ezekiel 33:30-32: "Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee *as* my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, *but* their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou *art* unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not."
-

- 2) Matthew 7:21-27: "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 which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."
 - 3) Matthew 23:3: "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not."
 - 4) Luke 11:28: "But he said, Yea rather, blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it."
 - e. Those who hear but do not obey fall victim to deceit: they deceive themselves. He who thinks that hearing the truth is sufficient, deludes himself. Yet this is what those people do who "go to church," thinking that their mere presence is enough. Even if one could quote the entire Bible from memory, but did not obey the commands and precepts thereof, his efforts will have been in vain. The promises of God are for the obedient.
 - 1) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 - 3) 2 Peter 2:21: "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."
 - 4) 1 John 2:4-5: "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him."
 - f. James is writing to Christians, not primarily to alien sinners.
 - 1) John 8:30-32: "As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - 2) Galatians 5:7: "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?"
 - 3) James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all."
 4. Verses 23-24: "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."
 - a. "One who hears and does not is like *a man*...who sees the reflection of his face in the mirror. One would suppose, from the nature of the illustration, that James intended to indicate that the man idly
-

and carelessly *glanced* at his face in the mirror and that the effort was so momentary and brief that there was not sufficient time for an impression to be made. On the contrary, the word ‘beholding’ is from *katanoeo*, to fix the mind definitely on, to regard attentively, to take careful note of. We shall see that it was not a defective look which led to forgetfulness, but the fact that he turned from the mirror to other things!” (Woods, p.88).

- b. The man described took notice of what needed to be done about improving his appearance when he looked in the mirror, but then turned away, ignoring the need, and quickly forgot the need. The point of the illustration is to show that those who listen to the truth but who do not obey the truth are doing exactly what the man did by merely looking in the mirror. “Lessons merely listened to, and not allowed to sink deeply into the heart, are quickly forgotten and they influence the life no more than a glance into a mirror” (Woods, p.88).
 - c. The New Testament requires that we take heed to what we hear and how we hear it. Only the truth will avail our souls; it avails only if we do what is required.
 - 1) Mark 4:24: "And he said unto them, Take heed **what** ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given."
 - 2) Luke 8:18: "Take heed therefore **how** ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have."
 - d. Carelessness in the pulpit and in the pew is hazardous to the soul! A heavy responsibility rests upon both the preacher (teacher) and hearer.
 - 1) Matthew 11:21-24: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."
 - 2) James 3:1: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation."
5. Verse 25: “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.”
- a. “A man looks into his mirror and for a moment sees his reflection, but passes on, forgetting what he saw. Such is characteristic of one who hears the word of truth, but soon forgets it, and is thus wholly uninfluenced by it. The genuine listener is far more interested. The verb ‘looketh’ clearly indicates this. It is from *parakupsas*, aorist active participle, from *parakupto*, to stoop and look, to *gaze* intently. It is the term used to describe the actions of Peter and Mary as they peered into the empty tomb of Christ on the morning of his resurrection. (John 20:5,11.) It describes, in vivid detail, one who stoops down, as it were, in order to get the closest possible look; and, as used in our text, denotes one who is highly interested in the word of truth. It is a stronger term, and indicates a much more minute look, than that suggested by ‘beholding’ in verse 24” (Woods, pp.90f).
 - b. That which is examined minutely and intently is the **perfect law of liberty** (the gospel). Some have alleged that Christians are not under any law, and cite such passages as Romans 6:14: "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." In the original, the definite article “the” is not in Paul’s statement, causing some commentators to think that his statement relates to any law.
 - 1) “The statement, ‘Ye are not under law, but under grace,’ is either (a) limited by the context; or (b)

it is not. If *it is not*, Christians are a lawless people...It is absurd to affirm, in one breath, that children of God are not under law, any law, law of any kind, and then to concede that they are under restraint. Law is restraint. Those who are restrained are under law. Where there is no law there is no restraint. Moreover, those who are without law are without sin. Sin is the transgression of the law. 'Where there is no law, neither is there transgression.' (Rom. 4:15.) Where there is no law, there is nothing to transgress, there is no sin. Hence, where there is no law, there is no sin. This conclusion is irresistible" (Woods, p.90).

- a) Romans 5:13: "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law."
 - b) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
- 2) Paul's point in Romans 6:14 is that we are saved by grace, not by the Law of Moses. "The *thesis* of Romans is that justification is through the system of faith which originated with Christ, and not by means of the law of *Moses*. (Rom. 1:16,17.) In much detail, and with many contrasts, does he pursue this argument from Rom. 1:13 through 8:25. The law which the Gentiles did not have (2:12-16), was the law of Moses. That upon which the Jew rested, in which he found instruction, gloried in, and often transgressed (2:17-24), was the law of Moses. The ordinances of the law (2:25-28), were of the law of Moses. The works of the law (3:19,20), were of the law of Moses. The righteousness, in Christ, apart from the law (2:21-26), is that which is apart from the law of Moses. The law of works, contrasted with the law of faith (Rom. 3:27,28), was the law of Moses. The law which issued in, and was established by faith (4:31) was the law of Moses. The blessing pronounced upon Abraham, because of his faith, (cited by the apostle to sustain the view that justification was not by the law of Moses), which was exercised anterior to the giving of the law (4:9-14), was declared to be apart from, and before the law of Moses. The law to which the Jews were made dead, in order that they might properly be joined to Christ (Rom. 7:1-6), was the law of Moses. The law which said, 'Thou shalt not covet' (Rom. 7:7), was the law of Moses. The commandment, which Paul found to be death to him (Rom. 7:7-25), was the law of Moses. The law which was weak, through the flesh (Rom. 8:2), was the law of Moses. It is, therefore, an exceedingly careless and confused exegesis which would take from such a context a statement which says, 'For ye are not under law, but under grace,' and deny that the law referred to is *the law of Moses!*" (Woods, p.91).
- 3) Paul is drawing the same contrast as that which is drawn in John 1:17: "For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Paul's point in Romans 6:14 is limited by the general context of the book of Romans to the law of Moses. His statement makes this point: "You are not under the law of Moses; you are amenable to Christ through the system of grace that pertains to his gospel."
- c. James makes it plain that we are under law by speaking of the gospel as "the perfect law of liberty." Other passages also speak of the gospel as a law:
- 1) Romans 3:27: "Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith."
 - 2) Romans 8:2: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 9:21: "To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law."
 - 4) Galatians 6:2: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."
- d. Law and liberty are not contradictory as used in the Bible. One who tries to remove all restraint and
-

live without law becomes victim of the cruelest taskmasters—sin. "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34). "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage" (2 Pet. 2:19).

- 1) Drug addicts, alcoholics, adulterers, and users of profanity cast off restraint when they entered their sinful practices. The practice became so ingrained that they cannot quit. Their "freedom" became a harsh, demanding master who will not be denied.
- 2) But the law of Christ provides liberty! Salvation is by grace through faith. The faith indicated is obedient faith. [However, in many New Testament reference where *faith* is named, the definite article *the* precedes it, indicating that the faith identified is *the* faith, *i.e.*, the gospel system. The definite article precedes *faith* in Ephesians 2:8; but the scholars are agreed that it is personal faith that is meant in this passage]. Obedient faith results in freedom from the guilt, the practice, and the penalty of sin, and in eternity we will be free from the very presence of sin. There is no salvation without an obedient faith, as the following statements demonstrate:
 - a) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - b) Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."
 - c) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, 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."
 - d) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - e) Matthew 7:21-23: "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 which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - f) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - g) Romans 8:2: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."
 - h) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
 - i) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - j) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - k) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither

whatsoever worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

- 3) Sectarian theologians assert that salvation conditioned on obedience voids grace and makes salvation a system of works instead of faith. They fail to see that their theory excludes faith itself!
 - a) John 6:28-29: "Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."
 - b) 1 John 3:23: "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment."
- e. The law of liberty is **perfect**. "'Perfect,' in this passage, is from *teleion*, from *telos*, end, thus indicating, completeness, fullness, wholeness. The law of Christ is full, complete, embodying all that is necessary to accomplish its purpose" (Woods, p.92). "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:14-17).
- f. He who looks into the perfect law of liberty, who is not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work required by the perfect law of liberty, who continues to be obedient, this man will be blessed in his obedience. No blessing is extended to one who merely hears; no blessing is given to one who obeys for a while and then returns to his former state of disobedience; no hope is offered to one who is a sluggard, or who merely goes through the outward motions of obedience. Only to the ones who obey from the heart, and who remain steadfast in their obedience, are the blessings of the gospel given.
 - 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
 - 3) James 1:12: "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."
 - 4) 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
 - 5) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - 6) James 2:17-18: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."

F. James 1:26-27: Pure and undefiled Religion.

1. Verse 26: "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."
 - a. Those to whom James wrote had a problem with practicing Christianity. They had obeyed the gospel, but did not practice the principles of the gospel. In this verse, he addressed those who had a problem with controlling the tongue. They were religious, but their words showed that they did not follow the gospel precepts that deal with the tongue. James declares that one who puts on the clothings of

religion, but who bridles not his tongue, deceives himself and practices vain religion.

- b. “‘Religious,’ from *threskos*, derived from *threskeia*, designates piety as it manifests itself outwardly—external devotion. It includes such activities as public prayer, observance of the Lord’s supper, church attendance, and the like. There is in the word some suggestion of scrupulosity, the disposition to be particularly concerned with the most minute details; and it is very possible for one to be extremely careful in such activities and at other times to indulge in unbridled speech highly displeasing to God....It is the design of Christianity to bring our whole being into harmony with Jehovah; and, if the tongue is unrestrained, this is sufficient evidence that in such a person the influence which Christianity normally exercises is wanting, and the man’s religion is vain” (Woods, p.96).
 - c. The tongue must be bridled. We must exercise complete control over the tongue. The Greek term rendered “bridleth” (*chalinagogeo*) “graphically portrays a man putting a bridle in his own mouth, and not in another” (Woods, p.96). The only one who can control the individual’s tongue is that person himself. Personal, direct, careful control must be exerted. It is a moment-by-moment, day-by-day, and year-after-year, operation.
 - d. If this effort is not put forth, the best that can be said about our religion is that it is vain (empty, valueless, having no benefit for the soul). Such a religion is unacceptable to God. “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:8-9).
2. Verse 27: “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.”
- a. On the other hand, pure and undefiled religion requires outward, positive action. The two items James specifically names involves tending to the needs of orphans and widows and keeping himself unspotted from the world. These are not the only activities required in order for one to have a pure and undefiled religion. Evidently, there was a problem among those addressed by the epistle regarding these two matters.
 - b. “‘Pure,’ from *kathara*, denotes that which is clean; ‘undefiled,’ from *amiantos*, that which is without contamination. The two words often appear together; and they evidence the fact that the religion which pleases God is in sharp contrast with the devotions which rely, for their efficacy, on ritual and ceremonial, and are without regard for the purity of heart and the sincerity of soul which the New Testament throughout enjoins. It is idle for one to expect God to be pleased with outward acts of religion when the heart is not pure” (Woods, p.98).
 - 1) Matthew 5:8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."
 - 3) Micah 6:7-8: "Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, *or* with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn *for* my transgression, the fruit of my body *for* the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"
 - 4) Matthew 23:25-28: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. *Thou* blind Pharisee, cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full
-

of hypocrisy and iniquity."

- c. Pure and undefiled religion **before God and the Father** is a religion that meets his approval as pure and undefiled. It is pure and undefiled only if he says it is pure and undefiled. His standard is the objective criterion of his inspired, written word. He does not give his approval to one who ignores or neglects the fatherless and widows, even though the individual may be active in keeping the outward forms of worship.
- d. God is spoken of here as our God and Father. "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" (ASV). It is significant that God speaks of himself here as *Father*, in view of the fact that the passage speaks of the fatherless. Elsewhere, God has expressed his concern over the welfare of the widows and fatherless:
- 1) Psalms 68:4-5: "Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him. A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, *is* God in his holy habitation."
 - 2) Psalms 146:9: "The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down."
 - 3) Exodus 22:22: "Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child."
 - 4) Deuteronomy 10:18: "He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment."
 - 5) Isaiah 1:17: "Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."
 - 6) Jeremiah 7:6: "*If* ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt."
- e. James admonishes Christians to **visit** the fatherless and widows **in their affliction**. To visit is "from *episkeptesthai*, present middle infinitive of *episkeptomai*, to see, to inspect, with a view of assisting. It is used figuratively here to designate the assistance which pure and undefiled religion requires of the Lord's people regarding 'the fatherless and widows.' It is quite obviously not limited to a social call; an orphaned or abandoned child would find little solace in such!" (Woods, p.99). The very purpose of the "visit" is to relieve the "affliction" (problem, need) they have.
- 1) Genesis 50:24-25: "And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely **visit** you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely **visit** you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence."
 - 2) Exodus 13:19: "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely **visit** you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you."
 - 3) Psalms 106:4: "Remember me, O LORD, with the favour *that thou bearest unto* thy people: O **visit** me with thy salvation."
 - 4) Acts 15:14: "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did **visit** the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name."
 - 5) Luke 1:68: "Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel; for he hath **visited** and redeemed his people."
 - 6) Ruth 1:6: "Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had **visited** his people in giving them bread."
-

- f. A fatherless person is one who is bereft of parents due to death or desertion, etc. The Greek word is *orphanous*. The widows are those women who have lost their husbands to death or desertion. In each of the cases, the individuals were in need of the essentials of life, which Christians may have the ability to provide. Orphans who have a trust fund set up to take care of their needs or rich widows are not in view in this verse. The ones to be assisted are those who have genuine needs. A Christian or a local congregation without the means financially to address the need has no obligation. The old formula still applies: Opportunity + Ability = Responsibility.
- g. The second part of pure and undefiled religion James identifies is for the individual Christian to **keep himself unspotted from the world**. “‘To keep,’ (*terein*, present active infinitive), means *to keep on* keeping oneself unspotted from the world! Children of God are members of the church (*ecclesia*, from *ek*, out of, and *kaleo*, to call); and have been called out from the world; they are, therefore not to love it (1 John 2:15), to have friendship with it (James 4:4), but to separate themselves from it. The ‘world,’ (*kosmos*) denotes that which is peculiar to this existence, in contrast with the realm of the spirit; the domain of Satan, that over which he rules, and in which his spirit is the dominating factor. It is the world of the unbelieving, the corrupt of heart and life; and Christians are to have no concourse with those who are in it, lest they suffer contamination. One keeps ‘unspotted’ from the world by not allowing the spots of the world to be transferred to him” (Woods, p.103).
- 1) 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
 - 2) Ephesians 5:11: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 5:22: "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure."
 - 4) 1 John 3:1-3: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
3. “It is alleged that this passage is exclusively individual; i.e., the duties here enjoined are obligatory upon individuals *only*, and that the church cannot scripturally participate in such. The objection is invalid because:
- a. “There is nothing in the passage or its context which justifies such a conclusion; if it be urged that James has in mind only the individual from his use of the word ‘himself,’ in the final clause of the verse, it should be noted that the context deals with the ‘church assembly’ (James 2:1ff), in the verses following which, as James penned the statement, was without chapter and verse division.
 - b. “Such a conclusion would mean that the church is forbidden to practice pure and undefiled religion.
 - c. “Such would require that each individual member of the church must, if able, take at least *two* orphans and at least *two* widows (the words are plural), into his own home and support them, in order to engage in pure and undefiled religion.
 - d. “If it is alleged that James designates by the word ‘oneself’ in the last clause of the verse a duty which only an individual may perform, and which bears no relationship to *church* duties, would not Paul’s statement, ‘But let a man prove *himself*, and so let *him* eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For *he* that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto *himself*, if he discern not the body’ exclude the church? (1 Cor. 11:28,29.) If ‘oneself’ in James 1:27, excludes the church from all participation in the matters mentioned, why would not ‘himself’ from the same mode of reasoning, eliminate the Lord’s supper from *church* action? “ (Woods, p.101).
-

- e. James is not identifying the *who*, but the *what*. The church collectively or Christians individually may do the work included in James 1:27.
- 1) Galatians 6:10: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." This directive was addressed to congregations in the province of Galatia. "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) And all the brethren which are with me, **unto the churches of Galatia**" (Gal. 1:1-2).
 - 2) 1 Timothy 5:16: "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 9:13: "Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal distribution unto them, and unto all *men*."
 - 4) 1 Thessalonians 5:14-16: "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*. See that none render evil for evil unto any *man*; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all *men*. Rejoice evermore."
- f. No widow or orphan can be provided the necessities of life without a home. A widow might have a home, but be unable to supply the other essentials. In that case, individuals or the church would give her the necessary funds or supplies in order for her to live. If a widow or orphan has no home, a Christian family could take that needy person into their home; or the church could provide the funds to enable a family to take in and care for the needy individual. Or the church might establish a legal home in which the needs of widows or orphans could be met. But in every case, if the needs of a widow or orphan is to be met, a home is essential; the home could be a natural or a legal home. If no natural home is available in the case of 1 Timothy 5:16, how could the church "relieve them that are widows indeed"?
- g. "Whether the church supports the needy in a *legal* home (one licensed by the state for the purpose of providing for the destitute), operating in harmony with state law, as in the case of the homes for the fatherless and the aged being operated by faithful Christian men and women and supported by the churches of Christ, or in a *natural* home (their own, or some other), the principle is precisely the same.
- 1) "A great (though temporary) need arose in the Jerusalem church, shortly after the day of Pentecost, which the disciples of that congregation sacrificially met by selling their possessions and placing the proceeds thereof into the hands of the apostles to be disbursed for the poor among them as the need arose. (Acts 6:1-6.) The needy thus provided for continued to exercise the autonomy of their families; the mere fact that they were being thus supported does not mean that the church took these homes into the congregations where the elders exercised oversight of the family structure in the same manner as they oversaw the operation of the Bible school.
 - 2) "The *church* and the *home* are separate institutions; each has its distinctive and peculiar duties; and, in this area the church cannot properly usurp the functions of the home. To the *home* God assigned the duties and responsibilities of child care; the church was not organized to engage in such. *The home cannot scripturally operate as a church; neither can the church operate as a home.* When the home falls into the need, it is the duty of the church to come to its aid; but, in so doing, it does not dissolve the home, and assume its functions.
 - 3) "The church has no more right to attempt to operate as a *home* than it does as a *state*! The doctrine of the union of church and state is Catholicism; the theory that the church can take over the home and operate it *as part of the church*, is hobbyism. The 'orphan homes' ...are not in conflict with
-

the church, because these institution are not doing the work of *the church*, they are performing the functions of *the home*; they are not in conflict with the *home*, because the home, which they replace for the child, is gone.

- 4) “What is an ‘orphan’ home? It is the home which the child had, but lost, and which has been restored. It is God’s will that ‘the solitary’ should be placed ‘in families’ (Psalm 68:6), and this is precisely what is done for them when they are placed in these homes and are provided for there. It follows, therefore, that these homes...are scriptural ones, and deserving of our liberal financial support, our prayers and our encouragement” (Woods, pp.102f).
-

JAMES 2

A. James 2:1-7: Proper Respect for Others.

1. Verse 1: "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons." "My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons" (ASV).
 - a. "With this warm and friendly phrase, characteristic of James, a new theme begins. This brotherly address was the manner in which the writer often began a fresh topic. (James 1:19; 2:5,4; 3:1; 5:7.) Insamuch as it was his intention to rebuke the brethren to whom he wrote for serious and repeated infractions of the law of love, it was fitting that this subdivision should thus begin" (Woods, p.105).
 - b. He advises them against holding the faith of Christ while maintaining a hypocritical stance in some matter. "The disposition which prompts one disciple of the Lord to entertain and exhibit favoritism for another, on external grounds, and because of worldly considerations, is wholly foreign to the spirit of Christianity, and a violent perversion of genuine religion" (Woods, p.105).
 - c. **The faith** indicated is the gospel system.
 - 1) Acts 6:7: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."
 - 2) Galatians 1:23: "But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."
 - 3) Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
 - d. Christ is described as "the Lord of glory." The phrase "the Lord" is italicized, to show the words are not in the original. Christ is **of glory**, meaning that his is a glorious being. The point of the statement is to teach that one who has such great glory must not be dishonored by practicing his religion in a hypocritical manner.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 2:8: "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."
 - 2) Ephesians 1:20-23: "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - 3) Philippians 2:10-11: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
 - 4) While on earth, he was humbled; it was necessary for him to live in virtual poverty if he was to accomplish his great mission; it was essential that he be hated and scorned, and ultimately be crucified. But he no longer occupies such a lowly position; he has been exalted to God's right hand, and given the scepter of the eternal kingdom. He is to be honored and revered for the position he now enjoys. No one is able to approach God through Christ while living in a state of sin; no such worship or service is acceptable.
 - e. The inspired writer decries the practice of **showing partiality** toward others on account of their rank, clothing or wealth. This disposition of heart was strongly condemned by the Lord, a fact known to

his enemies: "And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person *of any*, but teachest the way of God truly" (Luke 20:21). "Partiality, based on worldly or material considerations, is so far removed from the true spirit of Christ, that for any of his disciples to exhibit such is a violent perversion of the Christian religion" (Woods, p.106).

- f. God does not show partiality, and does not allow his people to show it. We are all equal before God.
 - 1) Galatians 3:26-29: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
 - 2) Acts 10:34: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons."
 - 3) Romans 2:4-11: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God."
 - 4) Ephesians 6:9: "And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."
 - 5) Colossians 3:25: "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."
 - g. It is not a violation of this principle to honor the king (1 Pet. 2:13; 1 Tim. 2:2). Neither is it contrary to the precept to show honor to those who serve the Lord. "Elders, deacons, aged men and women, dignitaries, men of great faith and courage, are often singled out, in the Scriptures, and declared to be worthy of special regard for their works of faith, their labors of love, and patience in hope they exhibit....What is taught is that there is no place for worldly acclaim in Christianity, and that all such reverence in public worship is unseemly and sinful" (Woods, p.107).
 - 1) 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 3:13: "For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 5:1-3: "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat *him* as a father; *and* the younger men as brethren; The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity. Honour widows that are widows indeed."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 5:17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."
 - 5) 2 Peter 2:10-11: "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous *are they*, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord."
2. Verses 2-4: "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?"

- a. James 2:2-4: "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; 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; Do ye not make distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?" (ASV).
 - b. James here gives an illustration of the two attitudes shown to visitors to the assemblies of the saints. "Synagogue,' [ASV] (*sunagogen*), from *sun*, with *ago*, to gather, thus, literally, to assemble with, meant, in the apostolic age, (a) a congregation assembled; (b) the place where the assembly took place. It seems quite obvious, from the context, that it is the first of these meetings—a congregation assembled—which is intended here. If to us today it appears strange that a Christian writer, addressing Christians regarding conduct in a Christian assembly should, nevertheless, refer to the event under a Jewish appellation, let it be remembered that the religious background of the writer and the people to whom he wrote was wholly Jewish; that these impressions lingered for a long time; that the Jewish influence was strongly felt and exhibited throughout the apostolic age; and that terms were of necessity used which would convey as fully as possible to Jewish people the mind and message of the Spirit through James" (Woods, p.107).
 - c. In the illustration, James describes the case of a rich man, decked out in fine clothes, and wearing a gold ring, being present at their assembly. In the same gathering, there was a poor man, wearing *vile* clothing. *Vile* describes the clothing as "old and shabby." *Gay* clothing is "goodly" apparel; bright and beautiful garments.
3. Verse 5: "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"
- a. James rebukes the brethren because they had shown partiality toward the rich (verses 4,6). Here he appeals to them as brethren to hearken to him for their own good.
 - b. The poor are generally more receptive to the gospel than the rich; the rich often are too proud to admit sin, do not want to give up certain practices, and are satisfied with their present condition, thinking they are self-sufficient. But the poor man is more apt to recognize his dependence on God, and has a degree of humility already.
 - 1) Mark 12:37: "...And the common people heard him gladly."
 - 2) Luke 4:18: "The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."
 - 3) There is an inherent danger to the soul involved in being either rich or poor: "Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny *thee*, and say, Who *is* the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God *in vain*" (Prov. 30:8-9).
 - c. Having a willingness to trust and obey determines the eternal fate of both rich and poor. "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3). God's choosing the poor is not an arbitrary selection, but is based on their being rich in faith.
 - 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
-

- 2) 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - 3) The poor outnumber the rich in the kingdom simply because the poor are much more likely to obey God than the rich are, and by virtue of the fact that poor people in the world outnumber those who are rich.
 - d. Those who believe and obey the will of God are heirs of the kingdom; they love the Lord.
 - 1) Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - 2) John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 16:22: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha."
 - 4) 1 John 5:2-3: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."
 - e. The kingdom James speaks of is the heavenly phase of the Lord's kingdom [they were already in the church; the church and the kingdom are the same—Matthew 16:16-19].
 - 1) Acts 14:22: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."
 - 2) 2 Peter 1:11: "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
 - f. We have eternal life now—in prospect and in promise. The promise of eternal life is to those who love him. God does not give preferential treatment to the rich and prominent; he blesses all of his people, rich or poor, with the same great promise of eternal life in heaven.
 - 1) Mark 10:30: "But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."
 - 2) Titus 1:2: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."
 - 3) 1 John 2:25: "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life."
 4. Verse 6: "But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?"
 - a. If God does not despise the poor, it is certain that we must not. We would do wrong if we despise or dishonor the poor by showing respect of persons, *e.g.*, by exalting the rich over them. To show partiality for the rich over the poor is to show contempt for the poor.
 - b. Rich men often persecuted the Lord's people. The poor are not usually in a position to foment opposition. The ringleaders of the persecutions against the church in the New Testament were prominent people. Demetrius the silversmith is a case in point: "And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world
-

worshippeth. And when they heard *these sayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre" (Acts 19:23-29).

- c. In showing contempt for the poor because they were poor, and showing respect for the rich because of their wealth, was illogical: the oppression the brethren suffered was caused by the rich, not by the poor. The respect these brethren were showing was on account of the wealth of the rich visitor; if they showed respect for the one because of wealth, they would show it to any other such person. So James reminds them that it was the rich that dragged them before the courts.
 - d. This was how some operated in Old Testament times also: "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes" (Amos 2:6).
5. Verse 7: "Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?"
- a. Furthermore, generally it was the rich who blasphemed the worthy name, yet these brethren were exalting this very class by their partiality.
 - b. To blaspheme is to speak evil, to slander. The verb tense used indicates that this was a continuing action, not a mere occasional word.
 - c. The worthy name mentioned could be no other name than *Christian* ["belonging to Christ"].
 - 1) Isaiah 56:5: "Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off."
 - 2) Isaiah 62:2: "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name."
 - 3) Acts 9:15: "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."
 - 4) Acts 11:26: "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."
 - 5) Acts 26:28: "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."
 - 6) 1 Peter 4:15-16: "For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters: but if *a man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name" (ASV).
 - d. That worthy name *by which ye are called* has the marginal rendering in the American Standard Version "which is called upon you." "This name was most surely that of *Christ*, pronounced upon us in baptism. (Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 2:38), and which Christians gladly wear because [it was] given by divine authority. (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:14,15)" (Woods, p.117).
 - 1) Matthew 28:19-20: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."
 - 2) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, 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."
 - 3) Acts 11:26: "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."
-

- 4) Acts 26:28: "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."
 - 5) 1 Peter 4:14-16: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."
- e. The disciples were *called* Christians. The Greek verb [*called*] is always used to identify an act of God. The term is used nine times in the New Testament. It is translated *call* two times, *reveal* once, *speak* once, *admonished of God* once, and *warned of God* four times.
- 1) Matthew 2:12: "And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way."
 - 2) Matthew 2:22: "But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee."
 - 3) Luke 2:26: "And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ."
 - 4) Acts 10:22: "And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee."
 - 5) Acts 11:26: "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."
 - 6) Romans 7:3: "So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man."
 - 7) Hebrews 8:5: "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."
 - 8) Hebrews 11:7: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."
 - 9) Hebrews 12:25: "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not* we *escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven."

B. James 2:8-13: The Royal Law.

1. Verse 8: "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well."
 - a. It is good to show respect for the rich (and for the poor), but it is wrong to exalt them or anyone else above others. We are required by the gospel to love our neighbors as we love ourselves; this includes the rich and the poor. This was also an Old Testament requirement: "Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee" (Deut. 16:19-20).
 - b. We are required to allow the royal law to fulfill its intended purposes in us. It is our obligation under
-

the gospel to love our neighbor as we love ourselves; this duty includes both the rich and poor; it permits no exception. If we follow this practice, we fulfill the royal law. No one else can fulfill the royal law for us but ourselves.

- c. The royal law is the “regal law”—the law enacted by the highest kingly authority: Almighty God. Woods (p.119) gives several reasons why it is called the *royal law*:
 - 1) It is the law of the kingdom of Christ; and, in summary, involves man’s entire duty to those about him.
 - 2) It is a law which originates with the King of the universe.
 - 3) It stands at the head of all other laws respecting man’s obligation to his fellows.
 - 4) It surpasses in nobility and all other obligations, and leads to the fulfillment of all others: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).
- d. Brother Woods adds: “Thus, whether James meant that it is a law such as is proper even for kings to follow; or, that it is the king of all other laws, his purpose is quite obvious, the design being to indicate the supreme position which this law should have in the hearts and lives of us all. Notwithstanding its greatness, it must be obeyed; and, any action which violates its spirit, such as favoritism for the rich, because they are rich, is a violation of it” (p.119).
- e. The two greatest commandments, although not stated in the decalogue, are revealed by the Lord in two prominent passages; on these two laws hang all the law and the prophets. They entail the greatest duty of man to God and to his fellowman.
 - 1) Matthew 22:37-40: "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."
 - 2) Mark 12:29-31: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." Compare Ecclesiastes 12:13.
 - 3) Other passages include the principles of these commandments:
 - a) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - b) Romans 12:9-10: "*Let* love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another."
 - c) Philippians 2:3: "*Let* nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."
 - d) 1 Peter 2:17: "Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."
- f. "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). Because the law of Moses has been replaced by the gospel does not mean that the royal law is no longer in effect; the principles it embodies are part of the gospel. Nine of the ten commandments of the decalogue are incorporated into the gospel, in strengthened form. The decalogue said, “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Ex. 20:14). Christ bound this prohibition in the New Testament, and added strength to it: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on

a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." James merely quotes the part of the royal law that was being disregarded by the brethren.

- g. The Lord did not say that we are to love our neighbor **instead** of ourselves, but to love them **as** we love ourselves. We need to have a proper view of ourselves, but not too high. "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3).
2. Verse 9: "But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."
 - a. If we love our neighbor as ourselves we do well, but if we have respect of persons, we commit sin. These brethren were violating the royal law; they were showing love for people based on the economic circumstances of the individual.
 - b. This practice put them into sin; they were violators of the law [the definite article *the* is not used in the original]. They were doing the opposite of walking in the light. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).
 - c. 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." The law that said they were to love their neighbor as they love themselves was the Mosaic Law, a precept that is also included in the Law of Christ. This transgression convicted them of sin.
 - d. How many Christians are guilty of this today? How many would sit still if preachers said what James said? How many preachers would say it?
 - 1) 1 Timothy 4:16: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 4:2-5: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."
 - 3) James 3:1: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation."
 3. Verse 10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all."
 - a. This verse gives a sobering thought. The word *for* shows the reason why the conclusion of verse nine is true. *Whosoever* shows the scope of the statement. *Shall keep* means to endeavor carefully to obey.
 - b. The obedience is to encompass every precept and commandment contained in God's law. We are required to keep the entire law, with all its individual components. The *royal law* (verse eight) is a summary statement. The law Christians follow is the law of Christ, the Gospel. We must not ignore or deliberately transgress a single feature of his law.
 - c. The point James makes is this: although we keep the whole law, with the single exception of one point of the law, we are guilty of violating the entire law. It is necessary to break only one law for one to become a lawbreaker. If one steals a car, he cannot excuse his theft by telling about all the banks he did not rob. A horse does not have to jump over every segment of a fence to be on the outside of the pasture. If we willfully violate one precept of the gospel because it pleases us to do contrary to what it dictates in that connection, we have shown our fundamental attitude toward all of the other features of the word of God. If we are willing to break one point of the law, we will be willing to break any other point, if we think we have sufficient cause.
-

- d. The point is this: The brethren were showing partiality to the rich; this was sinful; they were sinners despite the fact that they were obedient to many other precepts of the gospel. The gospel is not legalism, but it demands obedience; here we see that full and strict obedience is required.
- 1) Galatians 1:6-9: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
 - 3) Matthew 7:21-23: "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 which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - 4) Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
 - 5) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - 6) James 4:17: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin."
- e. With this information in mind, consider such things as instrumental music in worship, the missionary society program, women preachers, and every other tenet or practice that has no biblical authority. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:16-17). There is no New Testament authority for the use of instrumental music in the worship of the church on earth. Women are not authorized to preach or fill any other public function in the church (1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:8-15). We must have the Lord's authority behind every belief and practice in the religion of Christ.
- f. "With reference to the case James has been upon: Do you plead for your respect to the rich, because you are to love your neighbour as yourselves? Why then show also an equitable and due regard to the poor, because you are to love your neighbour as yourself: or else your offending in one point will spoil your pretence of observing that law at all. Whosoever shall keep the whole law, if he offend in one point, wilfully, avowedly, and with continuance, and so as to think he shall be excused in some matters because of his obedience in others, he is guilty of all; that is, he incurs the same penalty, and is liable to the same punishment, by the sentence of the law, as if he had broken it in other points as well as that he stands chargeable with. Not that all sins are equal, but that all carry the same contempt of the authority of the Lawgiver, and so bind over to such punishment as is threatened on the breach of that law. This shows us what a vanity it is to think that our good deeds will atone for our bad deeds, and plainly puts us upon looking for some other atonement." [Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.].
4. Verse 11: "For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law."
- a. All of God's law is to be obeyed; if not, what can be ignored or violated with impunity? If a man

violates one portion of the law, he has shown his true attitude toward the whole law, and toward God himself. To suppose one can pick and choose which is to be obeyed and which may be disobeyed is folly. To classify some sins as mortal and other sins as venial is to show ignorance of the Bible, and demonstrates hatred toward it.

- b. The same God who denounced and forbade adultery, also forbade murder. To violate one while obeying the other still makes one a sinner. One who only violates one feature of the law is not as depraved as one who violates many parts of God's law, but he is still in violation of the gospel. One sin is as bad as another in that every sin is a violation of God's word (1 John 3:4), but some sins have greater consequences than others. I had rather a man tell me a lie than to shoot me.
 - c. James is discussing the willful, presumptuous disregard for some commandment, not the occasional act of disobedience on the part of one, who through weakness, stumbles. One who thus stumbles is trying to do right; he will repent when he sees his error; he does not persistently continue in his disobedience.
 - 1) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 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. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
 - 2) 1 John 2:1-5: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him."
 - 3) Psalms 112:1: "Praise ye the LORD. Blessed *is* the man *that* feareth the LORD, *that* delighteth greatly in his commandments."
 - 4) Psalms 119:14-16: "I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as *much as* in all riches. I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word."
 - 5) 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
5. Verse 12: "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."
- a. We are here told to conduct ourselves as though we shall be judged by the law of liberty—for that is precisely what will happen.
 - 1) John 12:48-50: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."
 - 2) Revelation 20:12-15: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of* life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
-

- b. The law of liberty is the gospel of Christ.
- 1) John 8:30-32: "As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - 2) Romans 3:27: "Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith."
 - 3) Romans 8:1-2: "*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."
 - 4) Galatians 6:1-2: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."
- c. Although Christians are given liberty in Christ, that liberty is not a license to sin.
- 1) John 8:34: "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."
 - 2) Romans 6:1-4: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
 - 4) Galatians 5:13-14: "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."
 - 5) 1 John 3:3: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
- d. The statement *speak and do* sums up our whole obligation as Christians.
- 1) Matthew 12:34-37: "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad."
 - 3) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - 4) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - 5) Acts 1:1: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach."
- e. "James directs Christians to govern and conduct themselves more especially by the law of Christ. So
-

speak and so do as those that shall be judged by the law of liberty, v. 12. This will teach us, not only to be just and impartial, but very compassionate and merciful to the poor; and it will set us perfectly free from all sordid and undue regards to the rich. Observe here, The gospel is called a law. It has all the requisites of a law: precepts with rewards and punishments annexed; it prescribes duty, as well as administers comfort; and Christ is a king to rule us as well as a prophet to teach us, and a priest to sacrifice and intercede for us. We are under the law to Christ. It is a law of liberty, and one that we have no reason to complain of as a yoke or burden; for the service of God, according to the gospel, is perfect freedom; it sets us at liberty from all slavish regards, either to the persons or the things of this world. We must all be judged by this law of liberty. Men's eternal condition will be determined according to the gospel; this is the book that will be opened, when we shall stand before the judgment-seat; there will be no relief to those whom the gospel condemns, nor will any accusation lie against those whom the gospel justifies. It concerns us therefore so to speak and act now as become those who must shortly be judged by this law of liberty; that is, that we come up to gospel terms, that we make conscience of gospel duties, that we be of a gospel temper, and that our conversation be a gospel conversation, because by this rule we must be judged." [Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.].

6. Verse 13: "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment." "For judgment *is* without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment" (ASV).
 - a. Mercy will be extended in the Judgment to those who faithfully served Christ on earth. The best of us still stands in need of God's grace.
 - 1) Luke 17:10: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."
 - 2) Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - b. If we showed no mercy to others, we will receive no mercy ourselves. It is in our own best interest to show mercy and be willing to forgive others.
 - 1) Matthew 5:7: "Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."
 - 2) Matthew 6:14-15: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."
 - 3) Matthew 7:1-5: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."
 - 4) Matthew 18:23-25: "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made."
 - 5) Matthew 25:41-45: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him,

saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me."

6) James 2:1-6: "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons. 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? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?"

c. Mercy rejoices (glories) over judgment. Mercy cancels out judgment (condemnation). It is better that we receive mercy than judgment (justice).

d. "The consideration of our being judged by the gospel should engage us more especially to be merciful in our regards to the poor (v. 13): For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath shown no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment. Take notice here, (1) The doom which will be passed upon impenitent sinners at last will be judgment without mercy; there will be no mixtures or allays in the cup of wrath and of trembling, the dregs of which they must drink. (2) Such as show no mercy now shall find no mercy in the great day. But we may note, on the other hand, (3) That there will be such as shall become instances of the triumph of mercy, in whom mercy rejoices against judgment: all the children of men, in the last day, will be either vessels of wrath or vessels of mercy. It concerns all to consider among which they shall be found; and let us remember that blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. [Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.].

C. James 2:14-26: Faith Without Works is Dead.

1. Verse 14: "What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?"

a. There are four kinds of works discussed in the New Testament.

1) **The works of the flesh.** "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revel-ings, 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).

2) **The works of the Mosaic Law.** "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:16).

3) **The works of human merit** [activities invented by human ingenuity by which man seeks to obtain favor with God]. "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:9).

4) **The works God requires us to obey.** This is the kind of works James discusses in the text (2:14-26).

a) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

- b) Matthew 7:21-23: "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 which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - c) John 9:4: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."
- b. James emphasizes the practical aspects of Christianity; he teaches the need to **do**, and warns against hearing only. Here he shows that faith alone cannot save. There is no contradiction between James and Paul (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 3:28; 4:1-6). Paul is speaking of works required by the Law of Moses and the works of merit; James is speaking of works of obedience, in becoming a Christian and living the Christian life—in neither case do we earn salvation.
- 1) Luke 17:10: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."
 - 2) Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
- c. God excluded from the plan of salvation all works of which one might boast; he included those works which perfect faith (works which are commanded by the Lord). The doing of those which he excluded cannot save, and the neglect of those included leaves one unsaved.
- 1) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - 2) Romans 10:16: "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?"
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."
 - 4) 1 John 2:4-5: "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him."
- d. This involves a major difficulty for the proponents of salvation by faith only—it flatly denies their proposition. Their reply is that James is speaking of works done after becoming a Christian.
- 1) But this position denies their other major doctrine that a saved person cannot fall: they are admitting that works are required of a Christian, and James says without them they cannot be justified (saved).
 - 2) Therefore, in saying these works James talks about are to be done only by a Christian, they are saying that eternal salvation in heaven is conditional, that a Christian must faithfully discharge his duty.
 - 3) The works that James says are required for salvation include obeying the gospel plan of salvation (believe, repent, confess, be baptized) and faithfully following the dictates of the gospel. The
-

errorists deny the first but accept the second: thus they contradict their once-saved-always-saved theory. Obedience is required in order for an alien sinner to become a Christian; obedience is required of a Christian in order for him to remain pleasing and acceptable to God.

- e. To deny that any works have any part in being saved denies the essentiality of faith itself. If every item classified as a work is excluded from God's plan of salvation, then faith itself is excluded, for faith is specifically called a *work*.
 - 1) John 6:29: "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."
 - 2) 1 John 3:23: "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment."
 - f. One can claim to have faith, but for faith to profit the individual, it must be demonstrated [or perfected] by works of obedience. James deals here with the principle; other verses spell out the precise acts of obedience required. In the case of Israel at Jericho, certain conditions were required before the walls fell and the city became theirs: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days" (Heb. 11:30).
 - g. We may know that salvation is not by faith only if either of the following four points is true:
 - 1) **If salvation is by a living faith.** "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?...For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:20,26).
 - 2) **If salvation is in Christ.**
 - a) 2 Timothy 2:10: "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."
 - b) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - c) Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
 - 3) **If a figure of speech is used which puts a part of the process for the whole process.**
 - a) Acts 11:18: "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Only repentance is named; the other conditions are implied; repentance stands for the whole process.
 - b) 1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Only baptism is named; the other conditions are implied; baptism stands for the whole process.
 - 4) **If any believer is not saved.**
 - a) John 12:42-43: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."
 - b) Acts 26:27-28: "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."
 - c) John 8:30-44: "As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's
-

seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

2. Verses 15-17: "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be *ye* warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."
 - a. To illustrate the point of the preceding verse that faith without works is worthless, James introduces an example which clearly shows the valuelessness of faith without works. The words uttered were warm and kind, but were empty of any practical help. There was no profit to them (or us) in merely pronouncing such words over the hungry. Faith without works did not profit them, and it cannot profit us.
 - b. In verse seventeen, James states the fact that faith without works will not profit the soul just as faith without works will not profit the hungry. This restates the proposition of verse fourteen: the two verses in between serve as an illustration of the proposition.
 - c. If we have faith in our doctor, we will do what he orders; if we believe the Lord, we will do what he requires. The works referred to are the commandments of God.
 - 1) Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
 - 2) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - 3) James 2:20-22: "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"
 - 4) Cf. Matthew 23:2-3: "... The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not."
 - d. Faith without works is dead, being alone [being by itself]. It is dead outwardly and inwardly. A rose bush in winter appears dead, but it will come to life in the spring. However, faith without works is dead through and through, with no life whatever. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26).
 - e. As a hungry man is not profited by warm words and fair speeches, so neither is there any blessing in faith which does not prompt faithful obedience to the Lord's will. "We should be deeply impressed with the lesson which James teaches here that faith unattended by unquestioning obedience to the

Lord's will is as worthless and vain as the expression of empty wishes for the needy with no effort expended to relieve their distressed condition" (Woods, p.136).

3. Verses 18-19: "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."
 - a. Here a possible objection is addressed. James is open and willing to consider such objections and deal with them in a clear, objective, honest, and truthful way. Often sectarian preachers and their dupes will not properly consider and deal objectively with our arguments, while every faithful gospel preacher will deal scripturally with their assertions. They usually resort to personal attacks and emotional displays to sway an audience during debate. James was not like these.
 - 1) "Thou hast works—I have faith; each is important so you should not minimize faith. One can show his piety by his faith and another can show his by works; both may be equally devout" [This is the objector's argument]. *This argument is based on the assumption that faith can exist apart from works, which James denies and refutes.*
 - 2) "Show me thy faith apart from thy works, and I by my works will show thee my faith" (James). Faith cannot be seen; its existence is manifested only through the works it produces. If there are no works, there is no faith; if there is faith, there will be works. James demands that the objector demonstrate his faith apart from works—it cannot be done. Faith without works is dead; works without faith cannot bless. "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).
 - b. Thus the objection is invalid because it is based on an erroneous assumption. One who rejects good works must resort to good works to prove he has any faith at all. Faith without works cannot bless an alien sinner or a Christian; and faith can only be seen in works of obedience.
 - 1) Acts 1:1: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach."
 - 2) Acts 9:6: "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."
 - 3) Romans 6:17-18: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - 4) Philippians 2:12: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."
 - c. Verse nineteen is addressed to the objector of the previous verse. James, in this verse, proposes a test for the faith-only objector: "One of the basic matters of religion is the requirement of faith in the one God; you accept this. It is good to believe in him. But is this enough? Remember that the demons believe and tremble; you admit they are not saved. It follows therefore that one may believe and still not be saved. Faith without works can no more save an alien sinner or a Christian than faith only can save the demons who have faith."
 - 1) *Theos* ("God") denotes deity; it is the Greek word for divine nature. There is but one divine nature so there is but one God. There are three persons who possess this divine nature: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are all God; they each have divine nature. Plural pronouns are used in reference to God in Genesis 1:26; a plural noun is used in Genesis 1:1. Christ is referred to as God (John 1:1,14,17). The Father is called God (1 Pet. 1:3). The Holy Spirit is also called God (Acts 5:3-4).

- 2) *Thou doest well*. The acceptance of the proposition of one God is not under criticism; this is obligatory. But acceptance of the proposition by itself is not sufficient to save a lost soul.
- d. The demons believe and tremble (shudder). There are specific cases cited in the Scriptures.
- 1) Matthew 8:28-31: "And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine."
 - 2) Mark 1:23-26: "And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let *us* alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him."
 - 3) Mark 1:32-34: "And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him."
- e. The Bible speaks of men who trembled at manifestations of God's power.
- 1) Job 4:14-15: "Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up."
 - 2) Daniel 5:6: "Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another."
 - 3) Matthew 28:2-5: "And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified."
- f. Belief and trembling are not enough to save.
- 1) Acts 24:25: "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."
 - 2) Acts 26:27-28: "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."
4. Verse 20: "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"
- a. Faith without works is dead. This is an appeal to the objector to acknowledge the truth stated here. A vain man, literally, is an empty-headed fellow. He is called such because he rejects the proposition. The same evaluation fits one today who asserts that faith only can save. One who claims faith without works can save is called "vain" by the Holy Spirit, by whose power and guidance James wrote.
 - b. The kind of faith described (faith without works) is the same the sectarian world claims is sufficient to save. This falls under the condemnation of the inspired writer.
5. Verses 21-22: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"
- a. The case of Abraham is next introduced. The principle of Abraham's justification illustrates the
-

manner by which all men are justified today. His case is frequently cited in the Bible for this purpose (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:1-20; 17:1-8; Heb. 11:8-18; Gal. 3:15-29).

- b. Abraham and his experiences were familiar to all Christians, Jews and Gentiles alike. He is the spiritual ancestor of people of true faith today (Rom. 4:1-25; Gal. 3:29).
 - c. Abraham was justified, that is, he was counted, reckoned, pronounced, declared to be in a right relationship with God. The basic significance of justification is acquittal; to not be considered as an enemy of God; no separation exists between a justified person and God.
 - 1) Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear."
 - 2) Philippians 2:12-13: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure."
 - d. One who is justified has been declared not to be guilty any more.
 - 1) Matthew 12:37: "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." The words we spoke on earth that we are still accountable for will be a determining factor in our eternal destiny. Depending on the nature of the words we used, our words form an index to our spiritual condition. Our works will also be considered (Rev. 20:12-13).
 - 2) Acts 13:39: "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." An alien sinner is justified on the basis of faith (an active, living faith), not by the Law of Moses (or by a dead faith).
 - e. Abraham was justified by works. Not even the objector would deny this truth. The text does not mean he was justified by means of works, but out of works. God issued the verdict when the works appeared. "By" (Greek, *ex*) means "out of." Only God can justify; he justifies when the conditional works appear.
 - f. When was Abraham justified? When he offered up Isaac. What blessing would he have received if he had offered Isaac without the command to do so? (That is, if he had decided on his own to offer his son). He would have received no blessing, but further condemnation. What blessing would he have received if he had disregarded the command to offer Isaac? None. He would not have been justified.
 - 1) Hebrews 11:30: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days."
 - 2) John 9:6-7: "When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing."
 - 3) See also 2 Kings 5:1-14.
 - g. Abraham's faith exercised itself (acted, wrought with his works) in offering Isaac. God told him to offer his son; Abraham believed God meant what he said; so he did what God said do. What if he had refused to offer his son? It would have meant he did not believe God. But he obeyed, thus did he demonstrate his faith, and was justified.
 - 1) By his works his faith was made perfect. To be made perfect is to consummate, complete, finish. The tenses of the words are important. "Faith was continually exercising itself (imperfect tense) with works (the command to offer up Isaac on the altar), and out of these works faith was perfected at once (aorist tense). Neither works, nor faith operating alone can justify; each in
-

cooperation with the other produces that status wherein God justifies” (Woods, p.143).

- 2) Neither works nor faith alone can justify; each in cooperation with the other produces the great blessing of justification. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6).
6. Verse 23: “And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.”
 - a. The scripture referred to is Genesis 15:6: "And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness." Abraham accepted without question and despite the fact that he had no children and was in advanced age, God’s promise of a great posterity. He did not see how such could be, the physical conditions being as they were, yet he believed what God said about it.
 - b. The scripture (Gen. 15:6) is declared to have been fulfilled when Abraham’s faith was perfected. It is most important to notice when this scripture was fulfilled: it was not until his faith was perfected in his offering Isaac as God directed (Gen. 22; Jas. 2:21-22). Offering Isaac fulfilled the statement of Genesis 15:6.
 - c. Abraham was a believer earlier (Gen. 15:6). God acknowledged him as a believer, and his faith was *reckoned* for righteousness. To reckon is to regard, deem, consider, account. Thus God deemed, considered, regarded Abraham’s faith as righteousness (right-doing). Faith itself became an act of obedience since there was no act of obedience required of him at the time to show outwardly that he believed what God had promised regarding a vast posterity.
 - d. “In the nature of the case, the promise of great posterity involved matters which would require considerable time for their development; hence, there was nothing more, at the moment, for Abraham to do but to accept, without hesitation, the assurances of such from God. Thus, he did; and his acceptance thereof, became an act of righteousness which God, in his turn, accepted, and put to Abraham’s account for righteousness (right-doing). It is a violent perversion of this passage and historic incident from it to assume that because Abraham’s faith was accepted as an act of righteousness when there was nothing else required of him at the time that in our case faith will suffice without the performance of those conditions which are required of us now. Even in Abraham’s case, as James so clearly shows, the patriarch’s faith did not reach its consummation, its fulfillment, until it had translated itself into action in the offering of Isaac” (Woods, pp.146f).
 - e. Abraham was called *the Friend of God*. The meaning is not that he regarded God as his friend, but that God regarded Abraham as his friend (this is the significance of the subjective genitive).
 - 1) 2 Chronicles 20:7: "*Art* not thou our God, *who* didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?" God deemed Abraham his friend because he was faithful, he submitted to his will.
 - 2) John 14:15: "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (ASV).
 - 3) John 15:14: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."
 - 4) Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
 7. Verse 24: “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”
 - a. Faith and works of obedience are like fire and heat: when fire is present, heat will be evident. Having given the case of Abraham, James expresses the inspired, irresistible conclusion: a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. Faith is not here stated as having a part in justification but is implied by the concluding phrase: “and not by faith alone.” He has already shown that true faith can be manifested only by works of obedience, so when sincere works of obedience are present, faith lies behind them and promoted that obedience.
 - b. Any reasonable investigator of the preceding verses will see from the evidence presented that faith
-

bleses only when it leads one to do what God has commanded, thus will agree with the compelling conclusion of this verse.

- c. James' conclusion is established (1) by analogy (verses 14,15); (2) by demonstration (verses 17,18); (3) by example (the case of demons in verse 19 and the case of Abraham in verses 21-23); (4) by inspired affirmation (verses 14-26); (5) by an appeal to common sense (verse 24). "Ye see" (from the array of evidence presented) that "a man is justified" (declared to be innocent), "and not by faith only." The inference is obvious. There is no more important matter taught in the New Testament. [See Woods, p.147].
 - d. Justification is not by faith only. There is a great distinction between the truthful doctrine of justification by faith as taught by Paul and James (Rom. 5:1; Jas. 2:20ff) and the false doctrine of justification by faith only as taught by men. Faith without works of obedience is dead (2:17,20,26). Faith that justifies is either with or without works: if it is with works it is not by faith only; if it is without works it is by a faith that is dead, a position that is soundly rejected by James. It follows therefore that salvation is not by faith only and that those who teach this doctrine are false teachers.
 - 1) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 2:17: "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."
 - 3) 2 Peter 2:3: "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."
 - e. Luther changed the text of Romans 3:28 by inserting "alone." Since James contradicted his view, he said of the book, "I will not have it in my Bible in the number of proper chief books." He was honest enough not to try to harmonize James with his doctrine of salvation by faith only.
 - f. Paul and James both referred to the same scripture (Gen. 15:6); Paul used it to prove that Abraham was not justified by works (Rom. 4:1-5); James used it to prove he was justified by works (2:20ff). They were writing about two different kinds of works (Rom. 3:28; Gen. 22:1ff). Paul shows that salvation is through Christ by faith and apart from the works of the Law of Moses; James shows that salvation is by faith which expresses itself in humble, unquestioning obedience to the will of God. One cannot ride a dead mule; a dead faith cannot save anyone.
 - g. The same Lord who commanded faith, commanded baptism. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:18-20).
 8. Verse 25: "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?"
 - a. The case of Rahab is introduced by James to prove his case. Her story is related in Joshua 2. James says she was justified in the same way as Abraham. The selection of Abraham and Rahab as examples is significant; one is from noble rank, the other from the lowest ranks of society.
 - b. To those who argue the works involved in the context are works done after salvation, Rahab (an alien) is a severe thorn. As Abraham showed his faith by obedience, so Rahab, the former harlot, showed her faith by receiving, protecting, and helping the spies to escape. Her faith was not dead, but acted. "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace" (Heb. 11:31).
-

- c. She learned what God had done for the Israelites and against their enemies. She believed in him; she knew he was leading Israel; she did her clear duty by helping the spies. She did what the spies (God's messengers) told her to do.
- 1) Hebrews 11:31: "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace."
 - 2) Romans 10:17: "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
9. Verse 26: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."
- a. Faith without works is as dead as the body without the spirit. The body houses the immortal spirit and is put off by the spirit at death. "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting *you* in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off *this* my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me" (2 Pet. 3:13-14).
 - b. The spirit is the "vital principle by which the body is animated" (Thayer), and refers to the immortal nature of man. *Soul* is a general term having different meanings in different contexts. It is used to denote [from Woods, p.152]:
 - 1) The whole person.
 - a) Acts 2:41: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls."
 - b) 1 Peter 3:20: "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."
 - 2) The animal life which man has but which ends in death. "He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence" (Ps. 78:50).
 - 3) In contra-distinction to the spirit, the intellectual nature.
 - a) 1 Corinthians 2:14: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned."
 - b) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - c) 1 Thessalonians 5:23: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - 4) In reference to the spirit, our immortal nature. "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:31).
 - c. The body comes from our parents, but our spirit comes from God himself.
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."
 - 2) Zechariah 12:1: "The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him."
 - 3) Hebrews 12:9: "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?"
 - d. If the original sin doctrine were true, then our "sinful nature" would originate with God, since like begets like (Gen. 1:9ff). But the son does not inherit the sins of his father (Ezek. 18:20), and it is
-

unthinkable that we could be contaminated by the Father of our spirits. The doctrine is thus proved to be utterly false.

- e. What is life? It is that state or condition which exists while the body and spirit are united. What is death? The resulting condition when the spirit is separated from the body.
 - f. Based on the illustration that the body without the spirit is dead, James declares that faith without works is just as dead. The conclusion rests also on the discussion and evidence he presented in the preceding verses. If one separates faith and works, the faith remaining is as lifeless as a dead body.
 - g. The works to be joined to faith are the commandments of God. The principle of this context applies to both alien and Christian: to be acceptable to God, both must possess a living faith. "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).
-

JAMES 3

A. James 3:1-12: The Christian and His Tongue.

1. Verse 1: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." "Be not many *of you* teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment" (ASV).
 - a. The Greek term James used which is rendered "masters" is better translated as "teachers." "The word is not properly used in the sense of *master*, as distinguished from a *servant*, but as distinguished from a *disciple*, or *learner*. Such a position, indeed, implies *authority*, but it is authority based not on power, but on superior qualifications. The connection implies that the word is used in that sense in this place; and the evil reprehended is that of seeking the office of public instructor, especially the sacred office" (Barnes, p.55). The word is translated "teacher" in many other passages in the KJV, including these:
 - 1) John 3:2: "The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a **teacher** come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."
 - 2) Acts 13:1: "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and **teachers**; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul."
 - 3) Romans 2:20: "An instructor of the foolish, a **teacher** of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 12:28-29: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly **teachers**, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. *Are* all apostles? *are* all prophets? *are* all teachers? *are* all workers of miracles?"
 - 5) Ephesians 4:11: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and **teachers**."
 - 6) Hebrews 5:12: "For when for the time ye ought to be **teachers**, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."
 - b. A heavy responsibility rests upon those who would teach God's word. James cautions the would-be teacher to give careful attention to this highly responsible activity. The teacher and preacher must practice what they teach and preach! This fits the prominent theme of the epistle: we must be doers of the word and not merely hearers; we must act as well as believe; we must live up to what we teach. Our Lord set the perfect example: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to **do and teach**" (Acts 1:1).
 - c. Some of those who aspire to be preachers or teachers want the *position* due to the honor and prestige they think accompany it. But there are onerous obligations that pertain to being a proclaimer or teacher of the word.
 - 1) Ezekiel 3:17-19: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."
 - 2) Matthew 16:26: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own

soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

- 3) Matthew 18:1-7: "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!"
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 2:17: "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." Cf. Galatians 1:6-12.
 - 5) 1 Timothy 4:13-16: "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine....Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."
 - 6) 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."
 - 7) 2 Timothy 4:1-5: "I charge *thee* in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables. But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry" (ASV).
 - 8) 1 Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
 - 9) 2 Peter 3:16: "As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."
- d. Impressions made by teachers on others have eternal consequences—good or bad. It is a great privilege to help others prepare for eternity, but how reprehensible and horrible it is to influence a precious soul to go to torment!
- e. James was not trying to discourage anyone from being a teacher who has the ability and proper desire. Rather he is warning those who want to do it from the wrong motive.
- 1) Matthew 23:8-10: "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ."
 - 2) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 1:3-7: "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and
-

endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: *so do*. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm."

- 4) Titus 1:11: "Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."
 - 5) Hebrews 5:12-14: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
 - 6) 2 Peter 2:1-3: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."
- f. "What is condemned here is self-appointed teachers motivated by desires not worthy of those who teach and preach the word of God. Jesus positively forbade any unseemly seeking for prominence in teaching (Matt. 23:8-10); and some wise man in Israel penned the maxim: 'Love the work but strive not after the honor of a teacher.' A 'teacher,' (*didaskalos*), is an instructor in righteousness, and his work is vital to New Testament Christianity. Teaching is, indeed, basic to its existence; and, it flourishes only where it is assiduously taught. The early church depended on its teachers for edification, and these men are prominently mentioned through the sacred writings. (Acts 13:1; 1 Cor. 12:28.)...It is the work of teachers to *edify*. (1 Cor. 14:26.) It follows, therefore, that unless those who affect to teach are able to edify (instruct, build up, strengthen), their effort is unsuccessful" (Woods, pp.155f).
- g. Not everyone can be or should be a teacher.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 12:17: "If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling?"
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 12:28-29: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. *Are* all apostles? *are* all prophets? *are* all teachers? *are* all workers of miracles?"
- h. Minimum qualifications are obvious:
- 1) Faithfulness.
 - a) Romans 2:17-23: "Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, And knowest *his* will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?"
 - b) 1 Timothy 4:13-16: "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine
-

...Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

- c) 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."
 - d) 1 Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
 - e) 2 Peter 3:16: "As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."
 - f) 2 Corinthians 2:17: "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."
- 2) Knowledge of the word.
- a) One cannot teach what he does not know. Knowledge is not given miraculously or directly from heaven. It comes only through diligent study and application.
 - b) 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
- 3) Ability and skill to teach.
- a) One might have a tremendous knowledge of the word, but if he cannot communicate that information to others sensibly, his effectiveness as a teacher is minimal at best.
 - b) One might possess the knowledge of how to fly an aircraft, but if he has no skill to do so, he cannot do so; if he has no capacity to control an aircraft, how could he be expected to fly it?
- 4) A life that is consistent with the truth taught. Christ was perfect in life and teaching.
- a) Acts 1:1: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach."
 - b) John 8:46: "Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?"
 - c) Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."
 - d) 1 Peter 2:21-25: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."
 - e) Romans 2:17-23: "Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, And knowest *his* will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost
-

thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?"

- i. The specific word of warning offered by James is that teachers will receive the heavier judgment.
 - 1) Other passages that relate to this subject are these:
 - a) Matthew 5:19: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."
 - b) Matthew 11:20-24: "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."
 - c) Matthew 12:36: "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."
 - d) Matthew 18:6-7: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!"
 - e) Luke 12:47-48: "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."
 - f) John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."
 - 2) Where the KJV gives "greater condemnation," the ASV gives "heavier judgment." "The word translated judgment here, almost always means condemnation. The word thus translated (*krima*), is from *krino*, to separate, distinguish. Thus, at the great judgment day, the Lord *will separate* those who have been teachers of his word, from those who have not, and will then pass on them by far stricter standards than those applicable to non-teachers. The consequences involved in teaching that which is false are fatal; and those who have not properly prepared themselves for such work, and who thus mislead those whom they affect to teach, must answer under 'a heavier judgment,' than those not thus engaged....The lesson for us is that leadership involves responsibility; and the greater the area of leadership the greater the responsibility....But, if the responsibility is greater, and the judgment heavier for those who misuse or do not properly use the occasion, the reward is greater for those who do properly teach and edify others" (Woods, pp.157f).
 - 3) The Lord spoke of others who would receive this greater condemnation: "Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation" (Mark 12:40; cf. Luke 20:47).
- j. "A young man, when about to make choice of a calling in life, should place himself by anticipation at the judgment-bar of Christ, and ask himself how human pursuits and plans will appear there. If that

were the point of view taken, how many would have been deterred from the ministry who have sought it with a view to honour or emolument! How many, too, who have devoted themselves to the profession of the law, to the army or navy, or to the pursuits of elegant literature, would have felt that it was their duty to serve God in the ministry of reconciliation?" (Barnes, p.55).

2. Verse 2: "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same *is* a perfect man, *and* able also to bridle the whole body."
 - a. Doctors, at least in the past, look at the tongue when examining some patients, for it gives them reliable evidence of the general health of the individual. Our speech, which is the product of the tongue, can also reveal much of the spiritual condition of the heart.
 - 1) Matthew 12:34-37: "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."
 - 2) Matthew 15:11,18-20: "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man....But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."
 - b. We all may stumble in a variety of ways; James includes himself in the statement (cf. 1 John 1:7-10). To offend is to stumble, to fall, to trip. Even inspired men could thus stumble, especially in words. Their inspiration did not extend to their own personal lives (their own speech, motives, actions). Peter did not have to be inspired to tell his wife "Good Morning."
 - 1) Psalms 106:42-43: "Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand. Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked *him* with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity."
 - 2) Galatians 2:11-12: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision."
 - c. The word "stumble" (*offend*) is in a tense which indicates continuous action; "cleanseth" in 1 John 1:7 is also continuous action. We keep on stumbling and Christ keeps on cleansing (as we walk in the light, repenting and making the necessary correction when we offend—1 John 1:8-10). This stumbling is not an intended, deliberate, and continuing practice of sin; rather, it is through ignorance or momentary weakness. Deliberate sin is addressed elsewhere: "Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:23-29).
 - d. One who does not offend in word is a mature, fullgrown saint. This is not sinless perfection, for that

condition is beyond the best Christian, even the apostle Paul. One who does not keep on stumbling is the person who is denoted here; his offenses are not deliberate and are not regular. This is one who has gained control over his tongue (the point here) and the other weaknesses of the flesh.

- 1) Genesis 6:9: "...Noah was a just man *and* perfect in his generations, *and* Noah walked with God."
 - 2) Job 1:1: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name *was* Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil."
 - 3) Psalms 119:6: "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments."
 - 4) Luke 1:6: "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."
 - 5) Philippians 3:12-13: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before."
- e. One who has mastered his tongue, is one who has gained control over all the appetites of the physical body. If one is able to control the tongue, his self-control is such that he could control all the various sinful tendencies of his body. The key to controlling the tongue is to control what is allowed to reside in the heart—to control the tongue we must control the contents of the heart. "Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man" (Matt. 15:17-20).
3. Verses 3-5: "Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though *they be* so great, and *are* driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!"
 - a. Little things often accomplish great results. The bits in a horse's mouth enable the rider to control the body of that powerful animal. The helm (rudder) of a great ship governs the direction of the vessel.
 - b. So the tongue is a little member of the human body, but it is able to accomplish much.
 - 1) Proverbs 18:21: "Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."
 - 2) Proverbs 21:23: "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles."
 - 3) Ecclesiastes 5:1-2: "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."
 - 4) Ephesians 4:31-32: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."
 - c. A small fire can destroy a great city or a vast forest. The tongue can start small fights and great wars. But a fire can warm cold hands and can cook nourishing meals to warm and sustain the body. A tongue used properly can encourage the fainthearted, instruct the ignorant, build up the weak, and enhance the reputation of another.
 - d. The object of the passage is to show that with small articles (bits and rudders) we can control horses

and ships; and if we use our tongues correctly, we ought to be able to control ourselves. The tongue is small but has an enormous capacity for great influence; if we can control it we can also control all the other sinful tendencies of the flesh.

4. Verse 6: "And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." "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 (ASV)."
 - a. Here the writer discusses the evil effect of a misused tongue. He speaks of the tongue as a **world of iniquity**. "Iniquity" means "lawlessness." An out-of-control tongue does not operate under the restraint of law. *The emphasis is on the wrongful use of the tongue.* Thus used, the tongue can cause all kinds of evil and hurt; it is impossible to measure the extent of its evil capabilities. Included in the perverted use of the tongue are such things as slander, corrupt speech, lies, profanity, blasphemy, and false doctrine.
 - 1) "Here is the key to understanding what was said a little later. An uncontrolled tongue is closely allied with the inherent wickedness of unregenerated human carnality. Every conceivable form of lust, greed, deception, hatred, malignity and every evil, is aided, encouraged and propagated by means of the tongue" (Coffman, p.80).
 - 2) "History is replete with instances of wars, strifes, alienations resulting from its evil work. *Were all men suddenly to lose the faculty of speech, the number of sins of which men are continually guilty would be sharply reduced!*" (Woods, pp.164f).
 - b. The misused tongue **defileth the whole body**. It stains, spots, and dirties the whole person. Once the individual begins to misuse his tongue, his life is apt to be filled with all manner of evil practices and corrupt attitudes. One who has allowed his tongue free rein is not a person we would enjoy having as a close companion.
 - 1) Mark 7:20-23: "And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."
 - 2) "A mechanic may be capable of doing excellent work; but, if we catch him lying to us, we immediately regard his work as untrustworthy. It is an ancient and true adage that one is no better than his word" (Woods, p.165).
 - 3) The misuse of the tongue has a disastrous effect on the person himself. It is not the damage that the misuse of the tongue has on the Lord's body (his church), but the emphasis here is on the ruin it brings upon the offender himself.
 - 4) The point of this part of the verse is the direct opposite of what the writer enjoins upon us in James 1:27: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father...to keep himself unspotted from the world."
 - 5) "There is nothing else pertaining to us as moral and intellectual beings, which exerts such an influence over *ourselves* as the tongue. A man of pure conversation is understood and felt to be pure in every respect; but who has any confidence in the virtue of the blasphemer, or the man of obscene lips, or the calumniator and slanderer? We always regard such a man as corrupt to the core" (Barnes, p.58).
 - c. The corrupted tongue **setteth on fire the course of nature** [the "wheel" of nature, ASV].
 - 1) "A 'wheel' is that which is round, hence, 'the round of existence,' that is, the whole period of our lives. All of it is set on fire by the improper use of the tongue. 'Setteth on fire,' is from

phlogizousa, present active participle of *phlogizo*, to ignite, from *phlox*, a flame. We shall have no difficulty in understanding the passage if we keep in mind that it was the design of James to show the far-reaching effects of the abuse of the tongue, and thus the need of constant restraint thereof. So potent is it in its effects that it can, and often does, influence man's entire round (period) of existence. An inflamed speech, intolerant words, a false rumor may set on fire an individual, a city and even a nation. We recall only too well the rabble-rousing speeches of Hitler, and the overwhelming wave of the war spirit which swept over the German nation as a result. Banks have been broken, financial institutions driven to bankruptcy by thoughtless words spoken over a back fence" (Woods, p.165).

- 2) Within the individual's own life, the same kind of evil can be engendered when one begins to misuse his tongue. Corrupt speeches and evil words contaminate the speaker, and may indeed lead on into other kinds of sins. If a man speaks evil against another person, if he still has a measure of conscience, he will want to justify his words to himself; thus the victim of the speech is made out to be the villain, and the speaker the righteous one. In this fashion, a man can corrupt his own heart, and make it virtually impossible for him to love the other person. One who begins to use profanity, or to relate filthy stories, or to tell lies, is apt further to taint his life by other sinful conduct. What began as a simple profane word or falsehood, may lead into a life of full rebellion against God.
 - 3) Vincent, a prominent Greek scholar, concluded his discussion of this thought by saying it means, "the wheel which is set in motion at birth and runs on to the close of life. It is thus a figurative description of human life" (p.357).
 - 4) The tongue misused can defile families, businesses, congregations, and communities; it can destroy individuals and nations.
 - 5) The one who misuses his tongue for sinful purposes, corrupts himself and adversely affects many others. Sinful words can no more be gathered up and their evil influence removed, than can the feathers of a pillow be recovered once they have been scattered into a strong wind.
- d. The polluted tongue is **set on fire by *Gehenna***. This is the only use of the term "*Gehenna*" in the New Testament by any other than Jesus. James points out that the "fire which results from the tongue is comparable only to that which arises in hell (Greek, *Gehenna*).
- 1) "This term—*Gehenna*—originally was the name of the valley just outside, and to the southeast of the city of Jerusalem, where the children of Israel practiced the idolatrous rites of Moloch, which they borrowed from their heathen neighbors. There, the children of Israel sacrificed their own offspring to the fire god Moloch. When Josiah instituted reforms, he destroyed the altars, broke down the high places, and that the valley might be wholly unsuited for such practices, caused it to be turned into the garbage dump of Jerusalem. The garbage of the city was carted out there and in sufficient quantity that it had to be burned, and thus fires were continually burning. Occasionally bodies were thrown there and burned.
 - 2) "Thus, the place served as a fitting symbol of the place of future punishment, and the Lord so applied it hundreds of years later when he came to the earth. (1 Kings 11:7; 2 Kings 23:13,14; Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5.)
 - 3) "It is important to distinguish between *Hades*, the realm of departed spirits between death and the resurrection and *Gehenna*, the eternal abode of the finally disobedient. *Sheol*, occurring often in the Old Testament, is the equivalent of Hades in the New Testament. Hades is the intermediate state of the dead, between death and the resurrection, and contains the good and the bad who are, nevertheless, separated there, the good in a place of blessing, the wicked in torment. (Luke 16:23.)" (Woods, pp.165f).
-

- e. "*Gehenna*" is the human word, selected by the Holy Spirit, to be the name by which we know the place where the devil and his cohorts and dupes are to be eternally punished. As already noted, its name is derived from the name of the valley outside Jerusalem which became the garbage dump of the city. Hell, in reality the rubbish bin of the world, is reserved for those who die in disobedience to God.
- 1) 1 Kings 11:7: "Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon."
 - 2) 2 Kings 23:13-14: "And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile. And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men."
 - 3) Matthew 5:22, 29-30: "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire....And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."
 - 4) Matthew 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
 - 5) Matthew 18:9: "And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire."
 - 6) Matthew 23:15, 33: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.... Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"
 - 7) Mark 9:43, 45, 47, 48: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched....And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched....And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."
 - 8) Luke 12:5: "But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
- f. When did hell begin? At or before the beginning of time.
- 1) Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - 2) 2 Peter 2:4: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."
 - 3) Jude 6: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."
- g. "It is of interest to observe the care which James used in presenting these symbols. An evil tongue defiles the entire body. A defiled body is fit only to be thrown on the refuse dump (as was often done in early centuries), and there burned. It is truly a sobering thought that the fire which (figuratively) issues from our tongues when improperly used originates in hell, and will lead us there if we do not
-

learn to extinguish it” (Woods, p.166).

- h. Regarding the likeness James draws between the fire of hell and the fire that is emitted by the sinful tongue, we may observe that the fire of the tongue is aptly so-described because of the devastation it produces, the pain that it causes, and the ultimate goal to which it takes its victim.
5. Verses 7-8: “For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.”
 - a. In the beginning, God so-ordered his creation that man was given dominion over the earth and its other denizens (Gen. 1:26ff; 9:1-2). God placed an inherent fear of man in the beasts (Gen. 9:1-2), but that does not mean that no dangerous beast will inflict injury upon a human. That may have been the way it was originally, for none of the animals which came before Adam offered any danger to the first man (Gen. 2:19-20).
 - 1) “This dominion thus granted to man had to be exercised and retained. James does not say that *every* wild thing has been tamed; affirmed is the fact that every *kind* of creature has been brought under subjection to man. The most ferocious of beasts, the fishes of the deep, blue sea, the birds which soar high in the skies, and even the slimy serpents, have yielded to the superiority of man, and have been made subordinate to him” (Woods, p.167).
 - 2) “Tamed” is from a Greek word meaning “restrained” or “subdued.” “It is a literal fact that mankind, in response to the original directive of the Creator for man ‘to subdue’ the earth and the sea and everything in them (Gen. 1:28), has indeed done that very thing. How strange it is, and how tragic, that he has had no such success in the matter of ‘subduing’ his tongue!” (Coffman, p.82).
 - 3) Generally, the animal creation is under man’s control. Man has been able to tame, domesticate, or otherwise control, the animal creation. At one time, ancestors of the most domesticated kinds of pets were living in the wild, including horses, dogs, cats, and birds.
 - b. James classifies the animal creation under four groups:
 - 1) Beasts: four-legged animals.
 - 2) Birds.
 - 3) Creeping things: things that crawl or creep, such as snakes and insects.
 - 4) Sea creatures.
 - c. Man has been able to subdue the animals, but he cannot subdue his own tongue. But this does not mean that God cannot or will not hold us responsible for the misuse of our tongue. “The meaning is that birds and beasts, however wild and fierce they may be in their native habitat, *when tamed*, are no longer dangerous. One does not keep a tamed beast chained! The tongue, however, can never be tamed. It may be successfully restrained for forty years, but in an unguarded moment leap out a dangerous and hurtful thing. This statement of James was intended to teach us that we must ever exercise ceaseless vigilance in all matters pertaining to the tongue. How conscious all of us ought always to be of this painful fact. How often do we thoughtlessly give utterance to sentiments the moment said we would give the world to recall. It is impossible to bring back the spoken word” (Woods, p.168).
 - d. “We are next taught how very difficult a thing it is to govern the tongue: For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed, of mankind. But the tongue can no man tame, v. 7, 8. As if [James] had said, ‘Lions, and the most savage beasts, as well as horses and camels, and creatures of the greatest strength, have been tamed and governed by men: so have birds, notwithstanding their wildness and timorousness, and their wings to bear them up continually out of our reach: even serpents, notwithstanding all their venom and all their cunning,

have been made familiar and harmless: and things in the sea have been taken by men, and made serviceable to them. And these creatures have not been subdued nor tamed by miracle only (as the lions crouched to Daniel, instead of devouring him, and ravens fed Elijah, and a whale carried Jonah through the depths of the sea to dry land), but what is here spoken of is something commonly done; not only hath been tamed, but is tamed of mankind. Yet the tongue is worse than these, and cannot be tamed by the power and art which serves to tame these things....' The [writer] does not intend to represent it as a thing impossible, but as a thing extremely difficult, which therefore will require great watchfulness, and pains, and prayer, to keep it in due order. And sometimes all is too little; for it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Brute creatures may be kept within certain bounds, they may be managed by certain rules, and even serpents may be so used as to do no hurt with all their poison; but the tongue is apt to break through all bounds and rules, and to spit out its poison on one occasion or other, notwithstanding the utmost care. So that not only does it need to be watched, and guarded, and governed, as much as an unruly beast, or a hurtful and poisonous creature, but much more care and pains will be needful to prevent the mischievous outbreakings and effects of the tongue.”[Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.]

- e. James affirms that **the tongue cannot be tamed**. When a wild beast has been tamed, he is no longer considered dangerous; we do not chain or cage a domesticated animal, but the tongue must be viewed as still untamed and is to be restrained always. A spoken word cannot be erased. “Two questions we should raise on hearing something of an injurious character regarding others: (1) *Is it true?* There is a rather common type of small-souled individual who seems to think that he lifts himself from the anonymity he deserves by attacking others, and who appears to feel that besmirching and discrediting others bring credit to himself. We should, therefore, raise the question, *Do I know that this thing is so?* Unless I have sufficient evidence of the correctness of the report, I should throw the mantle of forgetfulness about it, and relegate it to the realm of forgotten things. But, granting that it is true, I should ask this additional question, (2) *Will it do any good to tell it?* Will it aid the church, the community, the nation? If not, let it be forgotten forever!” (Woods, p.169).
- f. The **tongue is an unruly evil**. The ASV has “restless” for “unruly.”
 - 1) Vine defines the Greek term as, “‘unsettled, unstable, disorderly’” (a, negative, *kathistemi*, ‘to set in order’), is translated ‘unstable’ in James 1:8; ‘restless’ in 3:8, RV [in the latter, the KJV ‘unruly’ represents the word *akataschetos*, signifying ‘that cannot be restrained’ (a, negative, *katecho*, “to hold down, restrain”). In the Sept., Job 31:11.]...In the Sept., Isa 54:11” [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].
 - 2) The only way to control the tongue is by the truth of God’s word. Civil law cannot fully restrain the tongue of ungodly people; it may be able to penalize some abuses, but is powerless to suppress the evil heart that directs the tongue and can do nothing to curb words spoken secretly. But the word of God is able to do so by promising eternal life in heaven for compliance and by threatening the eternal penalty of condemnation in *Gehenna* for non-compliance. Added to this two-fold appeal, is the marvelous love of God and his Son, which constrains us to be entirely compliant from the heart.
- g. The **tongue is full of deadly poison**. “They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders’ poison *is* under their lips” (Ps. 140:3).
 - 1) “That is, it acts on the happiness of man, and on the peace of society, as poison does on the human frame. The allusion here seems to be to the bite of a venomous reptile....Romans 3:13, ‘With their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips.’ Nothing would better describe the mischief that may be done by the tongue. There is no sting of a serpent that does so much evil in the world; there is no poison more deadly to the frame than the poison of the tongue

is to the happiness of man. Who, for example, can stand before the power of the slanderer? What mischief can be done in society that can be compared with that which he may do?" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997 by BibleSoft].

- 2) The tongue misused is able to destroy precious lives, sully innocent reputations, and result in the loss of souls. "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire" (Matt. 18:6-9).
 - 3) "Were there no listeners there would be no slanderers! He who encourages another in his calumny is about as guilty as he who commits it. The receiver of stolen goods is, under the law, as much of a criminal as the thief himself; why not then, the receiver of false and malicious gossip" (Woods, p.171).
6. Verses 9-10: "Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be."
- a. "We are taught to think of the use we make of our tongues in religion and in the service of God, and by such a consideration to keep it from cursing, censuring, and every thing that is evil on other occasions: 'Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, who are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be' (v. 9, 10).
 - 1) "How absurd is it that those who use their tongues in prayer and praise should ever use them in cursing, slandering, and the like! If we bless God as our Father, it should teach us to speak well of, and kindly to, all who bear his image. That tongue which addresses with reverence the divine Being cannot, without the greatest inconsistency, turn upon fellow-creatures with reviling brawling language.
 - 2) "It is said of the seraphim that praise God, they dare not bring a railing accusation. And for men to reproach those who have not only the image of God in their natural faculties, but are renewed after the image of God by the grace of the gospel: this is a most shameful contradiction to all their pretensions of honouring the great Original.
 - 3) "These things ought not so to be; and, if such considerations were always at hand, surely they would not be. Piety is disgraced in all the shows of it, if there be not charity....Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig-tree bear olive-berries, or a vine, figs? Or doth the same spring yield both salt water and fresh? [Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.].
 - b. The most blessed and noblest use of the tongue is to render praises to the Father; one of the greatest evils to which we can employ our tongues is to curse men, who are made in the image of God. Our author affirms that the same individual does both. No one can be pleasing to the Almighty while engaging in such contradictory practices. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also" (1 John 4:20-21).
-

- c. Since the children of God are not allowed to curse their enemies, it is certain that we may not curse our brethren with impunity.
- 1) Matthew 5:43-48: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."
 - 2) Romans 12:14: "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not."
- d. We cannot be in the right relationship with God if we are in a wrong relationship with our brethren.
- 1) Matthew 5:23-24: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."
 - 2) Matthew 22:37-40: "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."
 - 3) Matthew 25:40,45: "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.... Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me."
 - 4) 1 John 4:20-21: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."
- e. "The etymology of the word translated 'curse' is interesting and significant. It is compounded from *kata*, down, and *araomai*, to curse. One who feels disposed so to do, regards himself as occupying a higher position than other men, and privileged to deal thus with his fellows. He considers himself as able to *up* to God, and bless him; and *down* to men and curse them. It is a presumptuous and high-handed disposition wholly displeasing to God. James' word, *katarometha*, from *kataromai*, is derived from *katara*, a curse. This word, *etymologically*, is made up of the preposition *kata*, down, and *ara*, a prayer. It is therefore, an address to God in the form of a prayer that he will bring evil upon men. The noun *ara* was originally used by the Greeks to designate the goddess of destruction. A curse is, therefore, a petition to God to destroy men made in his own image!" (Woods, p.173).
- 1) When one curses another person (or some object), he is asking God to do the evil stated in the curse to the person or object. How logical is it to ask God to take a hammer, which has just hurt your finger, and consign it to the lower reaches of *Gehenna*? How spiritual is such a petition?
 - 2) God has the right and the power to bring curses against individuals and nations, as he did in the case of sinful Cain (Gen. 4:11) and others (Gen. 9:25; Deut. 27:15; Josh. 6:26). "These divine curses were not simply and solely imprecations, nor the utterance of evil desires, they carried their effects with them, and were accompanied by the sufferings which they foretold.... These curses did not develop from feelings of passion, revenge, and malice; they were prophecies of impending doom upon people who were highly disobedient to God" (ibid., p.174).
- f. **Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing.**

- 1) “The meaning here may be, either that out of the mouth of man two such opposite things proceed, not referring to the same individual, but to different persons; or, out of the mouth of the same individual. Both of these are true; and both are equally incongruous and wrong. No organ should be devoted to uses so unlike, and the mouth should be employed in giving utterance only to that which is just, benevolent, and good.
 - 2) “It is true, however, that the mouth is devoted to these opposite employments; and that while one part of the race employ it for purposes of praise, the other employ it in uttering maledictions. It is also true of many individuals that at one time they praise their Maker, and then, with the same organ, calumniate, and slander, and revile their fellow-men. After an act of solemn devotion...the professed worshipper goes forth with the feelings of malice in his heart, and the language of slander, detraction, or even blasphemy on his lips.
 - 3) “[My brethren, these things ought not so to be] They are as incongruous as it would be for the same fountain to send forth both salt water and fresh; or for the same tree to bear different kinds of fruit” [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997 by BibleSoft].
- g. Each individual of the race of *mankind* is **made after the likeness of God**. This is a reference to the statement in Genesis 1:26-27: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.... So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Since God is a spiritual being (John 4:24) and has no physical body (Luke 24:39), it is not our physical bodies that are made in God's image. God possesses a spiritual, moral, and intellectual nature. We are like God in this way. An ape has the same basic physical features of a man, but no right-thinking person is ready to say that an ape is made in God's image!
- 1) It is because we are made in God's image that makes human life sacred and precious. Therefore, God issues strong warnings against murder.
 - a) Exodus 20:13: “Thou shalt not kill.”
 - b) Matthew 19:18: “He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness.”
 - 2) Because we are made in God's image, God issued authority to civil government to punish murder as a capital offense:
 - a) Genesis 9:6: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."
 - b) Romans 13:1-5: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."
- h. **My brethren, these things ought not so to be.** The preceding truths lead to this conclusion. It is obvious from both scriptural principles and common sense, that the practice of praising God and cursing men with the same tongue is a vile and sinful activity. It is also an empty act. “Why pronounce evil maledictions upon another? They do not harm him; God is not influenced against another thereby; and, it is idle to engage in that which is both senseless and without profit. When, to this is added the fact that the action reverts upon the head of the one doing the cursing, and places him under the condemnation of God, it is seen to be both senseless and sinful” (Woods, p.176).
-

7. Verses 11-12: "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet *water* and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so *can* no fountain both yield salt water and fresh."
- a. A spring does not emit both good and bitter water. Some springs put out brackish water, suitable for drinking only by the very thirsty. But a spring is consistent; it does not give forth good water one moment and bitter the next. The tongue should be as consistent at a good spring of water.
 - b. A fig tree produces figs, not olives; a vine does not produce figs. Such a contradictory practice is impossible to find in nature. A spring cannot produce both fresh and salt water; a fig tree cannot yield a different kind of fruit; and a Christian's tongue is to be consistent in putting forth only words that are characteristic of a heart controlled and guided by the gospel. If it is, it will not be used to praise God one moment, and curse man the next.
 - c. "The illustration of the fountain to which James alludes here, would be especially familiar and impressive to his readers. In a land where rainfall is sparse, where wells are few and costly, and where the people are poor, multitudes of them depended on springs flowing out of the earth for their water supply. Access to an abundant supply of *good* water was one of the greatest blessings to people thus situated" (Woods, p.176).
 - d. "The yard of practically every house in Palestine had a vine and fig tree, and vines of various kinds grew on the hills round about. (2 Kings 18:21.) There is an unchanging law of nature that like produces like; and to this law the sacred writers often alluded" (ibid.).
 - 1) Matthew 7:16-18: "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."
 - 2) Matthew 12:33-35: "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."
 - e. "True religion will not admit of contradictions; and a truly religious man can never allow of them either in his words or his actions. How many sins would this prevent, and recover men from, to put them upon being always consistent with themselves!" [Matthew Henry's Commentary, ibid.].
 - f. "His argument is, No tree 'can' bring forth fruit inconsistent with its nature, as, e.g., the fig tree, olive berries: so if a man speaks bitterly, and afterward good words, the latter must be so only seemingly, and in hypocrisy: they can not be real. So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh. So the mouth that emits cursing cannot really emit also blessing." [Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997 by BibleSoft].
 - g. Barnes applies the illustration to the point of verse one: "[Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries?] Such a thing is impossible in nature, and equally absurd in morals. A fig-tree bears only figs; and so the tongue ought to give utterance only to one class of sentiments and emotions. These illustrations are very striking, and show the absurdity of that which the apostle reproveth. At the same time, they accomplish the main purpose which he had in view, to repress the desire of becoming public teachers without suitable qualifications. They show the power of the tongue; they show what a dangerous power it is for a man to wield who has not the proper qualifications; they show that no one should put himself in the position where he may wield this power without such a degree of tried prudence, wisdom, discretion, and piety, that there shall be a moral certainty that he will use it aright." [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997 by BibleSoft].
8. The tongue is capable of producing wonderfully great or monstrously wicked effects. "Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof" (Prov. 18:21). James has shown

us in the passage just studied some reasons why we must learn to control the tongue:

- a. It is a little member, but is able to bring about powerful effects.
 - b. It is the most difficult part of our anatomy for us to control.
 - c. It is not possible that a tongue can be so-tamed that it is beyond being misused; it must be guarded at all times.
 - d. It is a world of iniquity [lawlessness] because of its capacity to do evil.
9. If it is not brought under the control of the mind which is guided by the gospel, it can create havoc. It is no wonder that the Bible has so much to say about the power of the tongue and the need for its being under absolute control.
- a. Proverbs 15:1-2: "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness."
 - b. Matthew 12:36-37: "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

B. James 3:13-18: Wisdom and Understanding.

1. Verse 13: "Who *is* a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom."
 - a. The writer addresses a common problem in the church, that of dissension and division. He introduces the subject by asking a question: "Who is wise and knowledgeable among you?" One who claims to be such will demonstrate his wise and knowing nature by a life of meekness and wisdom. It is often the case that the one who speaks the loudest and most is thought to be a good leader, wise, and endued with much knowledge. Brashness, aggressiveness, arrogance, and pride do not make a good elder, a good teacher, a good preacher, or a good Christian.
 - b. False teachers and troublemakers in the church have always abounded. They can pretend to be wise and knowledgeable and are accepted by unwise and weak brethren as such. The Judaizers of the first century were like this. The "Crossroaders" of modern days were like this. The "liberal elite" of the present are not likely to discourage the thought that they are wise and knowing.
 - c. If one is wise and endued with knowledge in the Lord's church, he may demonstrate it by the way he lives. His life will be characterized by meekness and godly wisdom. A truly meek and wise person will never cause dissension or trouble in a congregation. One who is meek, may not be wise; but one who is wise, will be meek. We may look at the life of Christ and see therein exhibited perfection in "meekness of wisdom."
 - 1) He was not weak; he was not over-bearing; he was not arrogant; he was not mean-spirited; he was not vengeful; he was not bitter.
 - 2) He was "meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29).
 - 3) In everything, he is the perfect pattern by which we are to order our lives: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. 2:21-23).
 - d. Sometimes preachers, teachers, or elders create disharmony within a congregation; sometimes those who are not in a leadership role do so. The means of this strife might be harsh or false teaching; it might be hurtful words, attitudes, or actions. We claim to have the truth; we must so live as to make it plain that we indeed have the truth. "In all of the Epistle, the writer makes clear that the disposition

to avoid the practical duties of the Christian life, on the allegation of one's religion or faith, is a token of wickedness and sin, and not a manifestation of Christian character. Without such practical devotion, evidenced in deeds, such profession is worthless and vain" (Woods, p.180).

e. Vincent gives the following on *meekness*:

- 1) "Another word which, though never used in a bad sense, Christianity has lifted to a higher plane, and made the symbol of a higher good. Its primary meaning is 'mild, gentle.' It was applied to inanimate things, as light, wind, sound, sickness. It was used of a horse—'gentle'....The Christian word...describes an inward quality, and that as related primarily to God. The equanimity, mildness, kindness, represented by the classical word, are founded in self-control or in natural disposition.
- 2) "The Christian meekness is based on humility, which is not a natural quality but an outgrowth of a renewed nature. To the pagan the word often implied condescension, to the Christian it implies submission. The Christian quality, in its manifestation, reveals all that was best in the heathen virtue mildness, gentleness, equanimity—but these manifestations toward men are emphasized as outgrowths of a spiritual relation to God.
- 3) "The mildness or kindness of Plato or Pindar imply no sense of inferiority in those who exhibit them; sometimes the contrary. Plato's demagogue is kindly from self-interest and as a means to tyranny. Pindar's king is condescendingly kind. The meekness of the Christian springs from a sense of the inferiority of the creature to the Creator, and especially of the sinful creature to the holy God. While, therefore, the pagan quality is redolent of self-assertion, the Christian quality carries the flavor of self-abasement.
- 4) "As toward God, therefore, meekness accepts his dealings without complaint or resistance as absolutely good and wise.
- 5) "As toward man, it accepts opposition, insults and provocation, as God's permitted ministers of a chastening demanded by the infirmity and corruption of sin; while, under this sense of his own sinfulness, the meek bears patiently 'the contradiction of sinners against himself,' forgiving and restoring the erring in a spirit of meekness, considering himself, lest he also be tempted (see Gal 6:1-5).
- 6) "The ideas of forgiveness and restoration nowhere attach to the classical word. They belong exclusively to Christian meekness, which thus shows itself allied to love. As ascribed by our Lord to himself, see the note at Matt 11:29. Wycliffe renders it: 'Blessed be mild men.'" [Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997 by BibleSoft].

f. This section of James 3 apparently relates back to verse 1, where the writer issues a strong caution to those who aspired to be teachers. "If the teacher claims to be possessed of a superior knowledge by which he believes himself to be capable of instructing others, let him prove it by a godly life, richly filled with good works! It is to be seen that James gives two tokens which evidence wisdom and understanding: (1) 'good deeds,'; (2) 'meekness of wisdom.'

- 1) "This, incidentally, is a test which may be applied under all circumstances, at all times, and to all people, including ourselves! One's wisdom is evidenced, not by argument or assertion, but by a godly life garnished with good deeds.... We are disposed to regard men as wise as they are able to impress us with their learning oratory, or wit; James makes it clear that it is not *words*, but by *works* that true nobility of character is exhibited.
- 2) "We thus have a rule by which to determine whether we are wise and understanding. Do we seek constantly to practice the practical precepts of Christianity in ministering to those about us? Do we show meekness in our dealings one with another; and, do we avoid an arrogant, proud and unrestrained spirit? If not, then we are not possessed of the wisdom which is from above"

(Woods, pp.181f).

- g. “[Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you?] This is spoken with reference to the work of public teaching; and the meaning of [James] is, that if there were such persons among them, they should be selected for that office. The characteristics here stated as necessary qualifications, are wisdom and knowledge. Those, it would seem, on which reliance had been placed, were chiefly those which were connected with a ready elocution, or the mere faculty of speaking. The [writer] had stated the dangers which would follow if reliance were placed on that alone, and he now says that something more is necessary, that the main qualifications for the office are wisdom and knowledge. No mere power of speaking, however eloquent it might be, was a sufficient qualification. The primary things to be sought in reference to that office were wisdom and knowledge, and they who were endowed with these things should be selected for public instructors” [Barnes].
2. Verse 14: “But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.”
- a. Other renderings:
- 1) "But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth" (NKJ).
 - 2) "But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth" (ASV).
 - 3) “But if you have bitter jealousy or selfish ambition in your heart, do not boast and lie against the truth” (ESB).
- b. Notice that “envying” is translated as “jealousy” in the ASV. The word *zelos* is used in both a good and bad sense in the New Testament. “It denotes, when good, the desire one feels to emulate another whose attainments are of noble order; and, when bad, the envy and jealousy one experiences in the contemplation of another’s possessions, or accomplishments. The two ideas are closely related; and often there is only a little difference between a legitimate ambition to be like another, and envy over the attainments of another which one is without but greatly desires” (Woods, p.183). The word is modified by the adjective “bitter” in the text.
- 1) Ephesians 4:31: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:15: "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled."
- c. Vine gives the following definition of “strife” [”faction” - ASV]:
- 1) “*Erithia* (or— *eia*) NT:2052 [Strong’s Concordance number] denotes ‘ambition, self-seeking, rivalry,’ self-will being an under-lying idea in the word; hence it denotes ‘party-making.’ It is derived, not from *eris*, ‘strife,’ but from *erithos*, ‘a hireling’; hence the meaning of ‘seeking to win followers,’ ‘factions,’ so rendered in the RV of 2 Cor 12:20, KJV, ‘strifes’; not improbably the meaning here is rivalries, or base ambitions (all the other words in the list express abstract ideas rather than factions); Gal 5:20 (ditto); Phil 1:17 (RV; KJV, v. 16, ‘contention’); 2:3 (KJV, ‘strife’); James 3:14,16 (ditto); in Rom 2:8 it is translated as an adjective, ‘factious’ (KJV, ‘contentious’).
 - 2) “The order ‘strife, jealousy, wrath, faction,’ is the same in 2 Cor 12:20 and Gal 5:20. ‘Faction’ is the fruit of jealousy. Cf. the synonymous adjective *hairetikos*, Titus 3:10, causing division (marg., ‘factious’), not necessarily ‘heretical,’ in the sense of holding false doctrine.” [Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers]. [Note: The numbers Vine uses are the numbers assigned to the words in Strong’s Concordance].
- d. Strifes, factions, envying, jealousy—all of these stem from selfishness, the single greatest cause of

sin and crime. One basic difference between a child of God and a child of the devil is the selflessness of the former and the selfishness of the latter.

- 1) Proverbs 13:10: "Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised *is* wisdom."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 8:1-3: "Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him."
 - 3) These dispositions are listed with the works of the flesh: "Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies" (Gal. 5:20).
- e. We are strictly warned against glorying against another. "Additional evidence of the incisiveness of the words which the Holy Spirit selects is to be seen in the fact that the phrase 'glory not,' indicates not so much the mere fact of glorying, but the exulting over somebody else, because of the possession of real or fancied, advantages. The teacher, preacher, elder, deacon, Bible school instructor, editor, writer, or whoever he may be who exults (glories) in the thought that he is superior to some other because of his attainments in this, or some other field, falls under the ban of this passage....It [the word for glory] really means to boast of one's affairs to the hurt of another" (Woods, pp.184f). One cannot exalt himself in the favor of God by climbing over or trampling down someone else. Some of the brethren then apparently had this problem.
- f. We are warned not to lie against the truth. We are not to act or speak to the detriment of the truth. Envy, strife, exalting self, pride, etc., violate the truth; they do violence against the influence of the truth. "One who claims to teach the truth must certainly practice it, else his efforts are as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. For one to glory with the tongue because of the possession of an alleged or genuine superior knowledge, while entertaining jealousy and envy in the heart, is to be guilty of falsehood and manifestly opposed to the truth which such affect to believe. Such thus become unfaithful to the very cause which they profess to serve. Advocacy of a party-spirit in the church is never right; and where such a condition exists, those responsible are actually acting out a lie, inasmuch as they oppose the truth which they pretend to believe and to defend" (Woods, p.185).
- g. "[But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts] If that is your characteristic. There is reference here to a fierce and unholy zeal against each other; a spirit of ambition and contention. [Glory not] Do not boast, in such a case, of your qualifications to be public teachers. Nothing would render you more unfit for such an office than such a spirit. [And lie not against the truth] You would lie against what is true by setting up a claim to the requisite qualifications for such an office, if this is your spirit. Men should seek no office or station which they could not properly seek if the whole truth about them were known" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997 by BibleSoft].
- h. "A truly wise man is a very knowing man: he will not set up for the reputation of being wise without laying in a good stock of knowledge; and he will not value himself merely upon knowing things, if he has not wisdom to make a right application and use of that knowledge. These two things must be put together to make up the account of true wisdom: who is wise, and endued with knowledge? Now where this is the happy case of any there will be these following things.
- 1) "1. A good conversation. If we are wiser than others, this should be evidenced by the goodness of our conversation, not by the roughness or vanity of it. Words that inform, and heal, and do good, are the marks of wisdom; not those that look great, and do mischief, and are the occasions of evil, either in ourselves or others.
 - 2) "2. True wisdom may be known by its works. The conversation here does not refer only to words, but to the whole of men's practice; therefore it is said, Let him show out of a good conversation his works. True wisdom does not lie in good notions or speculations so much as in good and
-

useful actions. Not he who thinks well, or he who talks well, is in the sense of the scripture allowed to be wise, if he do not live and act well.

- 3) "3. True wisdom may be known by the meekness of the spirit and temper: Let him show with meekness, etc. It is a great instance of wisdom prudently to bridle our own anger, and patiently to bear the anger of others. And as wisdom will evidence itself in meekness, so meekness will be a great friend to wisdom; for nothing hinders the regular apprehension, the solid judgment, and impartiality of thought, necessary to our acting wisely, so much as passion. When we are mild and calm, we are best able to hear reason, and best able to speak it....
 - 4) "Observe.
 - a) "1. Envy and strife are opposed to the meekness of wisdom. The heart is the seat of both; but envy and wisdom cannot dwell together in the same heart. Holy zeal and bitter envying are as different as the flames of seraphim and the fire of hell.
 - b) "2. The order of things here laid down. Envy is first and excites strife; strife endeavours to excuse itself by vain-glorying and lying; and then (v. 16) hereupon ensue confusion and every evil work. Those who live in malice, envy, and contention, live in confusion, and are liable to be provoked and hurried to any evil work. Such disorders raise many temptations, strengthen temptations, and involve men in a great deal of guilt. One sin begets another, and it cannot be imagined how much mischief is produced: there is every evil work. And is such wisdom as produces these effects to be gloried in? This cannot be without giving the lie to Christianity, and pretending that this wisdom is what it is not. [Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.].
3. Verses 15: "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish."
- a. The "wisdom" of verse fifteen is not the kind of wisdom that comes from God, but from corrupt sources, and has the devil as its ultimate source. It is earthly, sensual, and devilish.
 - 1) Proverbs 2:1-6: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, *and* apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, *and* liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as *for* hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding."
 - 2) James 1:5: "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."
 - 3) James 1:17: "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."
 - b. It is **earthly** because it is characteristic of this sinful world, and is not consistent with the holy traits which originate in heaven, with God. Being of this world, it will perish with the passing away of this material sphere.
 - 1) "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17; cf. 2 Pet. 3:8-14)
 - 2) "The 'wisdom' which James condemns is of the earth, because it sets its affection on things of the earth and in only such finds satisfaction. The motives which prompts it to action are from below, and it hesitates not to use the basest of reasons even in matters of a spiritual nature"
-

(Woods, p.187).

- 3) 2 Corinthians 6:16-18: "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you; And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
 - 5) Colossians 3:1-2: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."
 - 6) James 4:4: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."
- c. It is **sensual** because it pertains to the lustful nature of sinful man: "Belonging to the *psuche*, soul' (as the lower part of the immaterial in man), 'natural, physical,' describes the man in Adam and what pertains to him (set in contrast to *pneumatikos* 'spiritual'), 1 Cor 2:14; 15:44 (twice), 46 (in the latter used as a noun); James 3:15, 'sensual' (RV marg., 'natural' or 'animal'), here relating perhaps more especially to the mind, a wisdom in accordance with, or springing from, the corrupt desires and affections; so in Jude 19." [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].
- 1) There are three aspects of man's nature. He possesses a spirit, a soul, and a physical body. The word "soul" is often used in reference to the "spirit" (the immortal part of our nature). When it is used in distinction from the spirit, "soul" refers to our animal life (cf. Ps. 78:50).
 - 2) "Inasmuch as the word *soul* is thus used, the adjective *psuchike* is literally, *soulish*, *natural*, or *animal*. Thus, the word (as an adjective) describes the condition of man when he is governed by the lower impulses of his nature, and not by his spirit, his higher being" (Woods, p.187).
- d. It is **devilish** because it partakes of its father, the devil (cf. John 8:44). It is demon-like, not God-like.
- 1) "It is devilish because it prompts those possessed of it to act like demons, being full of malice, ambition, egotism, malignity and pride. There is a doctrine of demons (1 Tim. 4:1ff), and those who follow their pattern are demon-like (devilish). There is but one devil; there are many demons" (Woods, p.187).
 - a) John 8:44: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."
 - b) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."
 - 2) A tree can be identified by the fruit it produces.
 - a) The fruit of a Christian includes all the traits which are Christ-like: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:5-8).
 - b) The fruit of a sinful person includes the works of the flesh: "Now the works of the flesh are
-

manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, 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).

- c) The fruit of a false teacher is the error he espouses and practices: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:15-20).
 - e. "The order of the words, 'earthly, sensual, devilish,' is significant. In each there is a progressiveness of sin, an advance to deeper guilt and thus to greater condemnation. (1) Those who are earthly, are of the earth; (2) those who are sensual, are influenced by the baser desires of the flesh; (3) those who are devilish, are of the nature of demons" (Woods, p.188). Those of the earth are worldly-minded, not spiritually-minded; those who are sensual have given themselves to carnal conduct; those who are devilish are fiendish in life and attitude.
4. Verse 16: "For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work."
- a. Sin does not lie dormant; neither does it remain alone. One sin begets another sin; sin makes itself manifest in attitude, motive, word, and deed. Sin spreads within the individual, and contaminates others who are under the influence of the first sinner.
 - b. When envying and strife appear, confusion and every other evil work are not long in appearing. Envy and strife produce other sins. "...Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (1 Cor. 5:6). Leaven is used in the Scriptures in a good sense and an evil sense (Matt. 13:33; 16:6). As leaven can permeate an entire lump of dough, exerting its power throughout, so a Christian's influence can be spread through the entire congregation, business, or society. The nature of the influence depends of the nature of the individual.
 - 1) Matthew 13:33: "Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."
 - 2) Matthew 16:6: "Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."
 - c. If the incestuous man of 1 Corinthians 5 were allowed to continue his sinful lifestyle, others would be affected. Other saints might get the idea that they ought to follow his example; outsiders might develop the wrong idea about the church, thinking that their pagan ways were superior to the way of Christ. For the benefit of the sinful person, the church, and the lost, it was essential for the Corinthian saints to take the action Paul ordered them to take.
 - d. "Whence such wisdom cometh: It descendeth not from above, but ariseth from beneath; and, to speak plainly, it is earthly, sensual, devilish, v. 15. It springs from earthly principles, acts upon earthly motives, and is intent upon serving earthly purposes. It is sensual indulging the flesh, and making provision to fulfil the lusts and desires of it. Or, according to the original word, *psychike*, it is animal of human—the mere working of natural reason....And it is devilish, such wisdom being the wisdom of devils (to create uneasiness and to do hurt), and being inspired by devils...who are noted in other places of scripture for their wrath, and their accusing the brethren. And therefore those who are lifted up with such wisdom as this must fall into the condemnation of the devil" [Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1991 by

Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.].

5. Verse 17: "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."
 - a. The wisdom of the passage originates in heaven. It was not engendered by human reasoning, but from God's infinite mind. This wisdom is characteristic of God, not of worldly-minded men. The various traits of love are given in 1 Corinthians 13; some of the traits of wisdom are listed here. Notice the similarity between the passage and the Lord's statements in Matthew 5:8-9: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."
 - b. This wisdom which inspiration requires is first **pure**. The heart must be pure or else the other qualities would be corrupt and useless. One who is pure is uncontaminated by an evil attitude, wicked words, or sinful practices; rather, he is entirely good. This does not mean that he is utterly without any fault, but does not regularly practice anything sinful; he might stumble occasionally, but walks in the light of the gospel to the best of his ability (1 John 1:7-10). Purity of heart is essential to fellowship with God and entrance into heaven.
 - 1) Matthew 5:8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."
 - 3) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
 - c. This wisdom is **peaceable**. A pure heart does not generate strife. "It is impossible for a fractious spirit, and a fractious disposition to issue from a pure heart" (Woods, p.191).
 - 1) Matthew 5:9: "Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."
 - 2) Romans 14:19: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."
 - 3) Colossians 3:15: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."
 - d. This wisdom is **gentle**.
 - 1) The characteristic of gentleness keeps us from demanding our own way; it makes us fair, kind and reasonable. "The gentle Christian does not insist upon his own rights.... Wisdom from above leads one to be gentle, kind and loving" (Turner, p.112). In this we have our Lord as the flawless model, and which the apostle Paul demonstrated in his life: "Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence *am* base among you, but being absent *am* bold toward you" (2 Cor. 10:1).
 - 2) It is especially important for a teacher or preacher of the word to avoid being overbearing, proud, or harsh. Severity in tone and word-choice may add to one's perceived authority, but will make no contribution to the gentleness required of him by the Lord.
 - 3) "It is gentle, not standing upon extreme right in matters of property; not saying nor doing any thing rigorous in points of censure; not being furious about opinions, urging our own beyond their weight nor theirs who oppose us beyond their intention; not being rude and overbearing in conversation, nor harsh and cruel in temper. Gentleness may thus be opposed to all these" (Henry, Biblesoft).
 - 4) Vine provides the following information: "1. *epieikes*...from *epi*, 'unto,' and *eikos*, 'likely,' denotes 'seemly, fitting'; hence, 'equitable, fair, moderate, forbearing, not insisting on the letter

of the law'; it expresses that considerateness that looks 'humanely and reasonably at the facts of a case'; it is rendered 'gentle' in 1 Tim 3:3, RV (KJV, 'patient'), in contrast to contentiousness; in Titus 3:2, 'gentle,' in association with meekness, in James 3:17, as a quality of the wisdom from above, in 1 Peter 2:18, in association with the good; for the RV rendering 'forbearance' in Phil 4:5, RV" [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].

- 5) Gentleness is not opposed to manliness. It does not negate courage. Gentleness is an indicator of strength and courage. An arrogant, loud-mouthed, overbearing, self-centered individual is violent and bombastic; he may be filled with self-assurance, but that does not give him strength of character; his aggressiveness may be under his control, but his attitude is not under the control of the wisdom from above.
- e. This wisdom is **easy to be entreated**.
- 1) A faithful Christian, having this characteristic, may be approached without fear of rebuke. One who operates under the influence of heavenly wisdom sincerely wants to be helpful, is easy to talk to, is open to questions and requests, and is ever congenial. He does not look for an excuse to deny an inquiry or an occasion to denounce another.
 - 2) "One easy to be entreated is open to reason, ever ready to hear what others have to say, and to be willing to yield to what is right. It is not to be interpreted as meaning that one is susceptible to every vagrant impulse, or carried about by every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14); there is no weakness or deficiency of courage inherent in the word. He who is thus influenced will listen carefully to what others have to say and, if it appears that the course he has adopted is an erroneous one, he will not hesitate to abandon it, and to accept that which is right....This disposition will exhibit itself both inwardly and outwardly" (Woods, p.193).
 - 3) "Heavenly wisdom is easy to be entreated, *eupeithes*; it is very persuadable, either to what is good or from what is evil. There is an easiness that is weak and faulty; but it is not a blamable easiness to yield ourselves to the persuasions of God's word, and to all just and reasonable counsels or requests of our fellow-creatures; no, nor to give up a dispute, where there appears a good reason for it and where a good end may be answered by it" (Henry, Biblesoft).
- f. This wisdom is **full of mercy**.
- 1) Mercy is from a Greek word which means compassion. James 1:27 is an example of compassion which we are told to manifest: "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."
 - 2) The nature of the gospel is such that if we desire to obtain mercy (from God or man) we must be willing to show mercy.
 - a) Matthew 5:7: "Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."
 - b) James 2:13: "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment."
 - c) Luke 10:37: "And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."
 - 3) We deserve justice, but we need mercy.
- g. This wisdom is full of **good fruits**.
- 1) "'Mercy,' here (*elous*) is compassion, the disposition to desire to help those in distress; and, the 'good fruits,' (*harpon agathon*) result from such an attitude of heart. A man possessed of such a disposition is like a tree ever in bloom, and ever bestowing its blessed fruits upon those about it. This, indeed, is the test of the heart's status; one cannot always know the condition of the tree, but

one can easily determine the character of the tree by the nature of the fruit” (Woods, pp.193f).

- 2) “Heavenly wisdom is full of mercy and good fruits, inwardly disposed to every thing that is kind and good, both to relieve those who want and to forgive those who offend, and actually to do this whenever proper occasions offer” (Henry, Biblesoft).
- 3) If one has genuine mercy in his heart, that compassionate disposition will manifest itself in the performance of kind acts of benevolence upon those who are in need of that which we are able to provide. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:9-10).

h. This wisdom is **without partiality**.

- 1) This is rendered “without variance” in the ASV. This disposition is the opposite of that which is possessed by the double-minded man (Jas. 1:8). His faith, disposition, words, and actions are consistent; they are not uncertain or indecisive.
- 2) One who is without variance is one who “does not doubt, is not drawn by divided opinions, and is stable in his views regarding religion” (Woods, p.194).
- 3) “The wisdom which is from above enables one to be firm in his views, and to entertain complete confidence in God and in his word....The faithful disciple of the Lord has confirmed convictions; these convictions are grounded in a robust faith in God’s word; and to question them is to question the word, and ultimately, the Lord himself. A vacillating, changeable disposition is neither conducive to Christian growth, nor to useful service in the vineyard of the Lord; and does not originate in the heavenly wisdom. We should all acquire and maintain principles by which to guide our lives and these may be properly obtained only from God. Those thus directed follow a compass which is not deflected by worldly acclaim or selfish interests, not by current views announced by favorite preachers” (Woods, *ibid.*).
- 4) “Heavenly wisdom is without partiality. The original word, *adiakritos*, signifies to be without suspicion, or free from judging, making no undue surmises nor differences in our conduct towards one person more than another. The margin reads it, without wrangling, not acting the part of sectaries, and disputing merely for the sake of a party; nor censuring others purely on account of their differing from us. The wisest men are least apt to be censors” (Henry, *op.cit.*).

i. This wisdom is **without hypocrisy**.

- 1) Hypocrisy is a form of dishonesty. On the surface, the hypocrite appears to be one thing, but in reality he is totally different. To say one thing and do the opposite is hypocrisy. Hypocrisy was a common malady among the Jewish leaders, which sparked a severe rebuke from Christ (Matt. 23). “Feigned piety, and an affected holiness, are as contemptible in God’s sight as deceptive actions. Neither has any place in the lives of Christians” (Woods, p.195).
- 2) Peter and Barnabas stumbled into hypocrisy in regards to accepting Gentiles into full fellowship. They both knew the truth, that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile in Christ, but under the pressure of a volatile situation, they blundered: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (Gal. 2:11-14). “Dissimulation” means “hypocrisy.”

- 3) "That wisdom which is from above is without hypocrisy. It has no disguises nor deceits. It cannot fall in with those managements which the world counts wise, which are crafty and guileful; but it is sincere and open, steady and uniform, and consistent with itself. O that you and I may always be guided by such wisdom as this! that with Paul we may be able to say, Not with fleshly wisdom, but in simplicity and godly sincerity, by the grace of God, we have our conversation" (Henry, Biblesoft).
6. Verse 18: "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."
- a. The fruit of righteousness is the good which righteousness promotes in the obedient. Righteousness is doing right—doing what God says.
 - 1) Psalms 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness."
 - 2) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - 3) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 4) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
 - 5) 1 John 3:7: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."
 - b. "All the good we do issues from righteousness, which in turn, flows out of the wisdom which is from above. All that is bad issues from that 'wisdom' which is from below, and which is earthly, sensual, devilish. Isaiah said, 'And the work of righteousness *shall be peace*; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and confidence for ever.' (Isa. 32:17.) Thus, the fruit is that which comes from the tree—righteousness....The meaning is that the blessed results of righteousness can never prosper except in an atmosphere of peace" (Woods, pp.195f).
 - c. Notice the similarity between these two passages:
 - 1) Matthew 5:9: "Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."
 - 2) James 3:18: "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."
 - d. "And then, lastly, true wisdom will go on to sow the fruits of righteousness in peace, and thus, if it may be, to make peace in the world, v. 18. And that which is sown in peace will produce a harvest of joys. Let others reap the fruits of contentions, and all the advantages they can propose to themselves by them; but let us go on peaceably to sow the seeds of righteousness, and we may depend upon it our labour will not be lost. For light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart; and the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Henry, Biblesoft).
7. The following table illustrates the differences between worldly and heavenly wisdom:
-

WORLDLY WISDOM	HEAVENLY WISDOM
EARTHLY	PURE
SENSUAL	PEACEABLE
DEVILISH	GENTLE
ENVIOUS	EASY TO BE INTREATED
STRIFE-CAUSING	FULL OF MERCY
CONFUSION	FULL OF GOOD FRUITS
EVERY EVIL WORK	WITHOUT VARIANCE
	WITHOUT HYPOCRISY

JAMES 4

A. James 4:1-4: Friendship of the World.

1. Verse 1: "From whence *come* wars and fightings among you? *come they* not hence, *even* of your lusts that war in your members?"
 - a. Our author raises the very important question of the cause of the dissension among them. He has just concluded a discussion of the peace which ought to prevail, but now brings up the problem of strife.
 - b. The cause of sin is lust (Jas. 1:13-15); the cause of troubles between brethren is lust (which is the very statement of this verse). Lust is a strong desire. If the item desired is sinful, there is no scriptural way for that desire to be gratified. To try to satisfy a legitimate desire by unscriptural means is also sinful.
 - c. W.E. Vine gives the following definition of lust:
 - 1) *Epithumia* denotes "strong desire" of any kind, the various kinds being frequently specified by some adjective (see below). The word is used of a good desire in Luke 22:15; Phil 1:23, and 1 Thess 2:17 only. Everywhere else it has a bad sense. In Rom 6:12 the injunction against letting sin reign in our mortal body to obey the "lust" thereof, refers to those evil desires which are ready to express themselves in bodily activity. They are equally the "lusts" of the flesh, Rom 13:14; Gal 5:16,24; Eph 2:3; 2 Peter 2:18; 1 John 2:16, a phrase which describes the emotions of the soul, the natural tendency towards things evil. Such "lusts" are not necessarily base and immoral, they may be refined in character, but are evil if inconsistent with the will of God. Other descriptions besides those already mentioned are:—"of the mind," Eph 2:3; "evil (desire)," Col 3:5; "the passion of," 1 Thess 4:5, RV; "foolish and hurtful," 1 Tim 6:9; "youthful," 2 Tim 2:22; "divers," 2 Tim 3:6 and Titus 3:3; "their own," 2 Tim 4:3; 2 Peter 3:3; Jude 16; "worldly," Titus 2:12; "his own," James 1:14; "your former," 1 Peter 1:14, RV; "fleshly," 2:11; "of men," 4:2; "of defilement," 2 Peter 2:10; "of the eyes," 1 John 2:16; of the world ("thereof"), v. 17; "their own ungodly," Jude 18. In Rev 18:14 "(the fruits) which thy soul lusted after" is, lit., "of thy soul's lust."
 - 2) *Orexis*, lit., "a reaching" or "stretching after" (akin to *oregomai*, "to stretch oneself out, reach after"), a general term for every kind of desire, is used in Rom 1:27, "lust."
 - 3) *Hedone*: "pleasure," is translated "lusts," in the KJV of James 4:1,3 (RV, "pleasures"). [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].
 - d. The conflict of the passage is that which arises between brethren. The warfare is figurative, although in some isolated cases, brethren have been known to resort to physical violence in the heat of their dissension. What causes this state of unrest and warfare? The following cases depict several of the common causes:
 - 1) Peace must be *produced*; if it is not diligently sought, it will not exist. Friction, anger, division, and malice develop naturally and easily; indeed, to avoid these troubles and to promote peace, much effort is necessary. Peace has to be created; it is not automatic and natural. To be produced and to be retained it must be sought, cultivated, and carefully maintained. If the effort required for peace to exist is not sincerely put forth, conflicts are to be expected.
 - 2) When one person demands his way and another demands his way, a clash of wills is the result, and division and conflict are the consequence. Assuming that the divergent ideas are matters of judgment, with one as worthwhile as the other, an amicable solution can be achieved—if both parties will follow the principles of the gospel. Otherwise, trouble is certain.
 - 3) In the case of one member having a practice of demanding his (or her) way, which produces resentment within the congregation, that individual's practice must be addressed by the leaders of the church. The disposition and operation of that person is inconsistent with the gospel; if he

is unwilling to cooperate, he must be disciplined (2 Thess. 3:6).

- 4) In the case of a practice or tenet which is contrary to the gospel, obviously the faithful brethren must oppose it. We are required to seek peace, but not at the expense of the truth (Jude 3). If conflict arises over a matter of truth, the dissension is unavoidable. This situation is not the one James is contemplating here; rather, according to the context, the conflicts are those which have lust as their source.
- e. *Selflessness* must prevail over *selfishness*; the peace and harmony of the church is to be exalted over "getting our own way." The secret to the maintenance of peace and the exclusion of conflict is to practice the basic gospel principle of putting the other person first.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 1:10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."
 - 2) Philippians 2:2-8: "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. *Let nothing be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."
 - 3) Romans 12:10: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (KJV). "Have brotherly love one for another in tender affection. Take the lead if *showing* honor one to another" (ESB).
 - a) The attitude commonly manifested by worldly people is self-interest. One of the great changes which must be made when one becomes a Christian is a shift in our attitude toward ourself and others. As a child of God, we must seek the interests of the other person, to love him as we love ourselves.
 - b) This sometimes means depriving ourselves of things and situations which we would like to have, in order to advance the welfare of our brother.
 - c) "Preferring one another" means that we give place to the other saint; let him have his way, even if we are deprived or even defrauded. The Greek term is *proegeomai*, which means "to go before and lead," is used in Romans 12:10, in the sense of taking the lead in showing deference one to another, "(in honor) preferring one another" (Vine).
 - 4) Romans 15:1-3: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."
 - 5) 1 Corinthians 10:24: "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's *wealth*."
 - 6) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - 7) Mark 12:30-31: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
 - 8) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether

I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

- 9) Philippians 3:16: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."
- f. "Wars and fightings do originate in the 'pleasures' which cause conflicts among our 'members.' The word 'pleasures,' from *hedonon*, a word designating desire and lust (the effects put for the cause), denotes the *source* of conflict; and 'in your members,' the *place* or *sphere* of it. Pleasures, as used here, means the satisfaction men seek from the senses and oftentimes the impelling desire for the gratification thereof. In this impressive passage, the writer represents pleasures as soldiers spread out among the members of the body, and using them as instruments to accomplish their ends" (Woods, p.199).
 - 1) Romans 7:23: "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:11: "Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."
2. Verses 2-3: "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts" (KJV). "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and covet, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war; ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend *it* in your pleasures" (ASV).
 - a. James directly points an accusing finger at his first auditors, declaring that on account of their lusts they were deprived of certain God-given blessings. Coveting the territory and wealth of another nation has led to countless wars; coveting what another individual possesses has caused an untold amount of crime and sin. A Christian who lives in sin cannot expect to receive the blessings and help of God; sin causes the prayers of the unfaithful to be ignored.
 - 1) Psalms 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*."
 - 2) Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination."
 - 3) Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear."
 - 4) John 9:31: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth."
 - 5) 1 Peter 3:12: "For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil."
 - b. The coveting of the passage leads to either figurative or literal war.
 - 1) David's lusting after Bathsheba, another man's wife, led to a life of severe heartaches for David and great trouble for the nation of Israel.
 - a) 2 Samuel 11:2-5: "And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman *was* very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and inquired after the woman. And *one* said, *Is* not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, *I am* with child."

- b) 2 Samuel 12:8-12: "And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if *that had been* too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be* thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give *them* unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst *it* secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun."
- 2) Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard which led to the death of Naboth and much trouble for Ahab and his nation (1 Kings 21-22).
- 3) The covetousness of Ananias and Sapphira led to their physical death and, since they died guilty of sin, to their eternal separation from God (Acts 5:1-11).
- 4) "It should be remembered that the rich man of Luke 16, was not charged with serious crimes against man or God; it is not affirmed of him that he engaged in *bad* things; he is said to have had his *good* things here; yet, he was rejected because fleshly gratification and the love of things material were the dominant factors of his life. *He who would gain heaven must sacrifice the things of the world.* We must choose whether to have our good things here, *or* hereafter; we cannot have them *both* here and hereafter!" (Woods, p.201). [It is not sinful to possess wealth, provided we put the Lord first and do not trust in our riches—Matthew 6:33; Mark 10:24].
- a) Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
- b) 1 John 2:15-17: "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
- c. James accuses his first auditors, saying that they kill, and covet, and cannot obtain. "This statement, insofar as it refers to *murder* would best be construed as figurative; it is most unlikely that James intended to charge wholesale murder upon the people to whom he wrote. If the word 'kill' is to be interpreted literally, then the writer was describing the situation which normally follows when men are influenced by evil desire. What James appears to mean here is that the motive which urged them on was murderous in its nature, and the disposition which leads men to murder" (Woods, p.202).
- 1) Covetousness and hatred are two of the prime causes of murder: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:13-15).
- 2) One who hates another already has within his own heart one of the principal causes of actual murder. If one Christian hates another saint, he might not take that person's life, but he has taken into his heart one of the motivations of murder—hatred. The absence of love can condemn the soul; the presence of hatred is certain to do so.
- 3) Some kind of strife is very likely to grow out of evil desire. If a man covets his neighbor's wife, any action he takes to gratify that evil desire will lead to conflict (literal or figurative) with the neighbor, whether he is successful or not in obtaining the other's spouse.

- d. Their lusts kept them from having the objects of their hearts' desire. Lust cannot be satisfied for long. It is impossible for the acquisition of material wealth and possessions to bring lasting satisfaction; the first million dollars merely whets the appetite for a second million. Even if one were to obtain multiplied billions of dollars in wealth, and vast estates, and great mansions in many places, and have all the automobiles, airplanes, boats, and electronic gadgetry available—before long these would cease to bring satisfaction. Solomon learned through unhappy experience that the wealth of this world is “vanity and vexation of spirit” (Eccl. 4:16). He was guided to conclude that the greatest fulfillment in this life is to fear God and keep his commandments (Eccl. 12:13-14). "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this *is* also vanity. When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good *is there* to the owners thereof, saving the beholding *of them* with their eyes?" (Eccl. 5:10-11).
- e. James declares that they do not obtain what they want because they do not ask for it. Certainly, God will not provide the evil request of a wicked man; if he obtains it, it is in spite of his making such a request of God. James also declares that there are other things they do not obtain simply because they do not ask. Some blessings are not obtained because no request is made.
- 1) “There are some things it is entirely proper for us to have; God wants us to have them; and he freely bestows them upon those who ask. Some seek to secure to themselves the things they want and perhaps need by methods which avoid God; and thus often fail to have such—not because they are forbidden to them, but because they simply do not go to the right source for them. We must, of course, (a) desire the *right* things; (b) we must ask God for the things which he graciously has for us (James 1:5); (c) and we must have confidence that he will hear and answer our petitions (1 John 4:14,15). God will answer the prayer of the penitent (Luke 18:14), the cry of the righteous Psalm 34:15), and those who *keep on asking* for their needs (Matt. 7:7)” (Woods, p.203).
 - 2) The things men often want the most, do them the least good (or will do them much evil); and that which they need the most, they do not want and will not request. People with the attitudes and practices described by James are not apt to ask for wisdom, patience, love, or the other spiritual traits. There are many unanswered prayers because the prayers go unstated. There are many good things we may ask of God, which are good for us, but which we will not receive unless we make the request. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. 7:7-8).
- f. Verse three states another reason when some prayers are not answered—when the item requested is for the gratification of lust. This would be like asking God for help in winning a fabulous lottery prize! Playing the lottery is sinful; to ask God to help with it is foolish and wrong; and to ask God to give great wealth would be for the purpose of gratifying a lust. The Bible issues warnings to those who *will be rich*—those who are determined to become wealthy: "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (1 Tim. 6:9).
- 1) The attitude of those James addressed showed no great concern over God's will being done; rather, they were more interested in fulfilling their own lusts. God will not heed such requests.
 - 2) The word *amiss* refers to something that is base. To ask *amiss* is to ask for selfish, base purposes. James condemns their praying for certain blessings or advantages when the chief purpose was to gratify some lustful desire.
 - 3) “The inspired writer does not rebuke his readers for asking God to prosper them materially. It is the motive which determines whether such a prayer is proper or not. If we ask in order that we may consume the blessings upon our lust, he will not hear....John prayed that his friend Gaius ‘in all things’ would ‘prosper and be in health,’ even as his ‘soul prospereth.’ (3 John 2.)... We must,
-

however, examine our motives with extreme care, for it is difficult for us to separate our needs from our desires, and to feel that the design is the former, when it is, in reality, the latter.... Those of whom James wrote did not obtain an answer to their petitions because they asked ‘amiss’ (evilly, from wrong motives.) When petitions are conceived in greed, and expressed hypocritically, God always turns a deaf ear. Only those prayers which have as their aim the glory of God, the advancement of his cause, and the genuine well being of his followers, ascend to the throne of grace, and bring a blessing. Our prayers reveal, in striking detail, and great accuracy, the character of our hearts to ourselves, to others, and to God” (Woods, pp.206f).

3. Verse 4: “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”
 - a. The charge James brings against those described is of spiritual adultery. The adultery is figurative, as are the references to fighting, killing, and war-making of verses one and two. Unfaithfulness to God is frequently described as spiritual adultery. In both the Old and New Testaments, allusions are made to this figurative relationship.
 - 1) The book of Hosea uses this figure extensively (also, Psalm 73, Isaiah 57, and Ezekiel 23).
 - a) Ezekiel 16:15: "But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was."
 - b) Ezekiel 23:43: "Then said I unto *her that was* old in adulteries, Will they now commit whoredoms with her, and she *with them*?"
 - c) Romans 7:1-4: "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." See also Ephesians 5:22-32, where a Christian’s relationship to Christ is described under the figure of marriage; under this figure, if the Christian becomes unfaithful to Christ, he is guilty of spiritual adultery.
 - 2) Vine defines this Greek term [*adulterers, adulteresses*]: “As in Israel the breach of their relationship with God through their idolatry, was described as ‘adultery’ or ‘harlotry’ (e. g., Ezek 16:15, etc.; 23:43), so believers who cultivate friendship with the world, thus breaking their spiritual union with Christ, are spiritual ‘adulteresses,’ having been spiritually united to Him as wife to husband, Rom 7:4. It is used adjectivally to describe the Jewish people in transferring their affections from God, Matt 12:39; 16:4; Mark 8:38.” [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].
 - 3) Thayer provides this definition: “As the intimate alliance of God with the people of Israel was likened to a marriage, those who relapse into idolatry are said to commit adultery or play the harlot Ezek 16:15 ff; hence, faithless to God, unclean, apostate: James 4:4” [Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2000 by BibleSoft].
 - b. James asks the rhetorical question, “Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?” Addressing these people as adulterers and adulteresses, he states that their friendship with the world made them the enemies of God. There is no middle or safe ground: one is either for God or else he is against God; if he is for God, he must be against the sinful world.
 - 1) Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other;

- or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
- 2) Matthew 12:30: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
- c. James used the verb *oida*, "which means to know by reflection, instead of the common word *ginosko*, to know by observation. Proper discernment of sin does not require participation therein; one may know its character and fruit by reflection. It is not necessary to imbibe poison in order to know its devastating effect; nor does one have to take *potions* of human philosophy to know the deadly character thereof. We have only to reflect on the sad cases of those formerly among us who have succumbed to its fatal effects and are lost to the cause of Christ, to realize that the same tragic results may follow from our participation" (Woods, pp.209f). A deaf man cannot hear the thunder and a blind man cannot see the sun, but they can be fully appraised of the reality of those two items.
- d. One who is a friend of the world is one whose chief interests are with the world; God is secondary at best in his priorities. Such a man has set his affections, not on heaven, but on worldly pursuits; his greatest delights are worldly in nature. The material world will dissapate at the return of our Lord (2 Pet. 3:10-11); material possessions lose their glow after they are amassed; it is impossible to gratify fully and finally our fleshly appetites; and these fleshly appetites fade with the advancement of old age. Further, sinful pleasures can only result in evil consequences: sickness, dissapation, other sins, and finally eternal loss.
- 1) Whether one puts otherwise innocent worldly activities before the Lord, or else participates in activities that are sinful in their very nature, the result is the same: the individual becomes the enemy of God. It is in our own best interest to put serving the Lord above all mundane pursuits.
 - 2) 1 John 2:15-17: "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
 - 3) Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - 4) 1 John 4:4: "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."
 - 5) 1 John 5:19: "*And* we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."
 - 6) Ephesians 4:17-19: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."
 - 7) Ephesians 5:11: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*."
-

- 8) Romans 6:1-4: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
- e. Friendship with the world results in our being in a state of separation with God. Indeed, the word "enmity" denotes a state of hostility. One who lives in opposition to God is certain to be defeated! The word translated *enmity* is found also in the following passages:
- 1) Luke 23:12: "And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were **at enmity** between themselves."
 - 2) Romans 8:7: "Because the carnal mind *is enmity* against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."
 - 3) Ephesians 2:14-15: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the **enmity**, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace." [In this case, the Mosaic Law separated the Jews and Gentiles; it made them to be enemies to each other.]
 - 4) Galatians 5:20: "Idolatry, witchcraft, **hatred**, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies." [The ASV translates "hatred" as "enmities].
- f. Many may honestly believe themselves to be great friends of God, but by their doctrines and practices, they have become his enemies. It is not necessary for one to declare overtly that he is God's enemy; his beliefs and practices are sufficient to make him such. "One is an obvious lover of the world who finds greater delight in the association of worldly people than with those who are followers of the Christ; who experiences greater pleasure in frequenting those places which are sinful and secular, rather than the assemblies of the saints; and, who promotes those things which are of the world in lavish fashion, while giving a bare pittance of his means into the service of the Lord....Those who take their stand *for* the world, in *this very act* take their stand *against* God" (Woods, pp.212f).
- 1) 2 Timothy 4:10: "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia."
 - 2) John 16:2: "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."
 - 3) Acts 23:1: "And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."
 - 4) Acts 26:9-11: "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against *them*. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities."
 - 5) Philippians 3:16-19: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is* *their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things)."
 - 6) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not
-

our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

B. James 4:5-12: Humility Enjoined.

1. Verses 5: "Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?" (KJV). "Or think ye that the scripture speaketh in vain? Doth the spirit which he made to dwell in us long unto envying?" (ASV).
 - a. First, it is important to be aware that the inspired writer is not referring to one particular passage of scripture; there is no specific verse in the Old Testament where this exact statement is found, although some Old Testament statements may resemble this thought (cf. Deut. 32:1-21).
 - 1) Genesis 6:3-7: "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."
 - 2) Proverbs 27:4: "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?"
 - 3) Ecclesiastes 4:4: "Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit."
 - b. It appears clear, therefore, that the reference of the verse is to the broad teachings of the Old Testament Scriptures—that the Old Testament teaches this truth generally.
 - 1) The point of verse five could be paraphrased in this manner: "Do you think that the teachings of the scripture regarding lust and envy, elements that pertain to the sinful world, are to be taken lightly? Do you suppose that the teachings of the scripture can be ignored with impunity?" God's word is not to be taken lightly; what it says on any subject cannot be sinlessly disregarded.
 - 2) The Old Testament warned against idolatry; it forbade the worship of anyone or anything except God (Ex. 20:1-6; 1 Sam. 7:3; Josh. 24:14-16; cf. Matt. 4:10). The Israelites left a history of repeated departures from the God of Heaven to serve the idols crafted by human hands (cf. Isa. 44:9-20). They were not held guiltless, but were severely punished for their offenses. God has not changed (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8). He holds people accountable to the higher standard of the New Testament. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" (Heb. 2:1-4).
 - c. Another difficult feature of the verse is to identify the "spirit" mentioned as being in us. Prominent commentators allege that it is the Holy Spirit. But does the Holy Spirit "lust to envy?" Hardly! No divine being can be guilty of lusting, which is a disposition and act forbidden by the inspired word of God. The Holy Spirit, who delivered the inspired word, would not and could not have violated any provision of that revelation. We must look elsewhere for the identity of the spirit James meant—to the human spirit.
 - d. The word "lust" denotes a strong longing for something.

- 1) Romans 1:11: "For I **long** to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:2: "For in this we groan, **earnestly desiring** to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven."
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 3:6: "But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, **desiring greatly** to see us, as we also *to see* you."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 1:4: "**Greatly desiring** to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy."
- e. The word "envy" is a "feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others" (Vine, p.37). Vine, a Greek scholar, also states that "this evil sense always attaches to this word." Envy is a common failing of humans, our hearts frequently long to envy (cf. Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 3:9-13). Could anyone correctly charge the Holy Spirit with envying? "The phrase, 'to envy,' signifies to be covetous, to be influenced by a selfish desire for what others have—a passion which drives men to the gravest of crimes in order to obtain that which they yearn for" (Woods, p.217).
- 1) Matthew 27:18: "For he knew that for **envy** they had delivered him."
 - 2) Romans 1:29: "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of **envy**, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers."
 - 3) Galatians 5:2: "**Envyings**, murders, drunkenness, revellings, 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."
 - 4) Philippians 1:15: "Some indeed preach Christ even of **envy** and strife; and some also of good will."
 - 5) 1 Timothy 6:4: "He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh **envy**, strife, railings, evil surmisings."
 - 6) Titus 3:3: "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and **envy**, hateful, *and* hating one another."
 - 7) 1 Peter 2:1: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and **envies**, and all evil speakings."
- f. "Why does the spirit, which is in us, covet with great desire? Men in the flesh, and motivated by fleshly inclinations are often prone to look with envious hearts upon those who enjoy greater prosperity than they possess; and covetously to desire the possessions of others. This disposition often leads them to hate their fellows, to attempt to obtain from them, by what ever means necessary, those things upon which they have fixed their hearts. Often people are exceedingly jealous of the possessions and attainments of others, and they desire to acquire that which others have....
- 1) "Whether they are successful in this effort or not, their hearts are filled with envy, jealousy, covetousness. Such seems to have been the condition characteristic of many of those to whom James wrote. This disposition led to the commission of the crimes enumerated in the earlier part of the chapter. (Verses 1-4.) The writer had emphasized the sinfulness of all such; had shown that the general teaching of the Scripture forbids friendship with the world, and charged that the *spirit which God placed in them was exercising itself to envy*.
 - 2) "We thus regard the passage to be declarative and not interrogative; the 'spirit' (which to envy yearns) to be the human spirit, and not the Holy Spirit; the words, *envy* and *yearns* to be taken in

their ordinary sense, and thus believe the passage to teach: 'The spirit which is in you is a covetous and envious one.'

- 3) "We must reject the view of most denominational expositors that the spirit here designated is the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, and that God or the Holy Spirit is enviously jealous of us, for whatever reason, on the ground that it is incredible to us that the writer would affirm of *deity* that which he had earlier so severely condemned in *men*" (Woods, p.217).
2. Verse 6: "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (KJV). "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore *the scripture* saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble" (ASV).
 - a. The pronoun "he" is in reference to God (the antecedent is in verse 4). One who is a friend of the world is the enemy of God, who caused our spirit to dwell in our mortal body, and who gives more grace. "More grace" means "greater grace." God is the giver of this greater grace. The word "giveth" is continuous action, according to the Greek construction (Woods, p.221). Notice the difference between the KJV and the ASV regarding the statement: *Wherefore he saith* (KJV) and *Wherefore the scripture saith* (ASV). Each means the same. God speaks through the Scriptures.
 - b. "It is as if those to whom he penned the preceding passage had said, 'You have correctly described our situation; and, it is very true that we are disposed to be lustful and envious, but this disposition is in our innermost parts, being exercised by our spirits. Is not then our situation hopeless and helpless?' James' answer is, 'No. Granting that such is your situation, there is no compelling reason for you to yield to such desires, because there is *grace* to assist you, sufficient grace to meet your needs, grace greater than the temptations which pull you down'" (Woods, p.221). The point being made here is very much like Paul's statement in Romans 5:20: "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." The abundance of God's grace is truly great: "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 1:14).
 - c. We are told that God resists those who are proud, a truth taught in Proverbs 3:34: "Surely he scorneth the scornors: but he giveth grace unto the lowly" [which is here quoted by James]. James quoted the scriptures to prove his point, and his statement was itself inspired. The sermon in Acts 2 contains 11 quotations from the Old Testament, and the remaining 14 verses are themselves inspired scripture.
 - d. God opposes the proud; he is an enemy to their way of life. "'Resisteth,' is from *antitasso*, a military term which means to set in battle array; and, 'proud,' from the preposition *huper*, and the verb *phainomai*, literally to show oneself above others. God is said to fight against those who elevate themselves in this fashion" (Woods, p.222).
 - e. James informs us that, while God opposes the proud, he provides grace to those who are humble. He keeps on giving them grace as they maintain their humility.
 - 1) Matthew 5:3: "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
 - 2) Philippians 2:3-5: "*Let nothing be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."
 - 3) 1 Peter 5:5-6: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."
 - 4) "We should be impressed with the fact, and deeply grateful that, even in this world, he *gives us* far more than we are required to *give up*, and then adds to this eternal life in the next world: 'Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. Jesus said, Verily I say unto

you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.' (Mark 10:28-30)" (Woods, p.223).

3. Verse 7: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
 - a. To submit to God is to put yourself in the service of God. There is a sense of urgency inherent in the Greek text. "The verb means to place yourselves in the position of those who are in the service of God; and, in the aorist imperative denotes immediate action, action influenced by a sense of urgency. It is significant that there are ten aorist imperatives in verses 7-10, all with a note of urgency, and requiring immediate and forthright action....The aorist tense suggests a once-for-all act in which we are forevermore to place ourselves in the rank of God's faithful soldiers, and to *remain* there" (Woods, pp.223f).
 - b. The Bible speaks of several relationships which require submissiveness on our part.
 - 1) We are to be submissive to God:
 - a) Romans 10:3: "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
 - b) James 4:7: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
 - 2) Wives are to be submissive to their husbands: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord" (Col. 3:18).
 - 3) Christians are to be submissive to the elders under whose care they serve God: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17).
 - 4) We are to be submissive toward those who are older: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pet. 5:5).
 - 5) We are required to be submissive to civil authority: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake" (Rom. 13:1-5).
 - c. The greatest example of submissiveness to God is the case of Christ.
 - 1) Matthew 26:39: "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*."
 - 2) Hebrews 5:8: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:21-25: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and

Bishop of your souls."

- d. We are told to take our stand against the devil. Brother Woods states that the Greek word word for resist "has a military connotation, and was frequently used of those who placed themselves in battle array against an enemy and held their ground. We are, therefore, to face satan in battle array; to recognize him as a formidable and dangerous enemy; and to fight off all of his advances" (p.224).
 - 1) If there were no danger, there would be no need for this warning. The warning is given to God's children, therefore, the plain implication is erected that a child of God can so-sin as to be lost. Indeed, this possibility is powerfully proclaimed in the Scriptures: "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" (Jas. 5:19-20).
 - 2) Alertness, courage, resolute determination, knowledge, love, and faith are required in maintaining our stand against our arch-enemy.
- e. Many warnings are issued in the Bible about the devil.
 - 1) Ephesians 6:10-18: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."
 - 2) 1 Peter 5:8-9: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "(For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
- f. The great enemy of our souls is known by various names in the Scriptures.
 - 1) He is called **Satan**: This name means "adversary." "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it" (Job 1:6-7). This dark account reports the activities of Satan, as he went about his evil work.
 - 2) He is called the **devil**. This names means "accuser" and "slanderer." As this appellation shows, he is a "calumniator, a gossip-monger, one who slanders another for the purpose of injury" (Woods, p.225).
 - a) He made accusations against righteous Job: "And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his

substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face" (Job 1:8-11). God called the devil's hand, and Job's faith shone forth brighter than the sun.

- b) Revelation 12:10: "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."
 - 3) He is called the **tempter**: "For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain" (1 Thess. 3:5).
 - 4) He is called **Beelzebub**: "But when the Pharisees heard *it*, they said, This *fellow* doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils" (Matt. 12:24).
 - 5) He is called **the enemy**: "The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels" (Matt. 13:39).
 - 6) He is called **the wicked one**:
 - a) Matthew 13:19,38: "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side....The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*."
 - b) 1 John 2:13-14: "I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one."
 - c) 1 John 3:12: "Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."
 - d) 1 John 5:18: "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."
 - 7) He is called **Belial**: "And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" (2 Cor. 6:15).
 - 8) He is called **the Deceiver**: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. 12:9).
 - 9) He is depicted by other designations:
 - a) He is called **the Great Dragon**: "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads" (Rev. 12:3).
 - b) He is called **the father of lies**: "Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).
 - c) He is called a **murderer**: "Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).
-

- d) He is called a **sinner**: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).
- g. "We resist the devil by always refusing to yield to his allurements, and by repelling and opposing his temptations. He has many tricks (2 Cor. 2:11), and we must not be ignorant of his devices. He is ever engaged in his insidious efforts to seduce the good; and, 'as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.' (1 Pet. 5:8.) It is necessary, therefore, as Peter admonished, to be 'sober,' and 'watchful,' with reference to this 'adversary'" (Woods, pp.225f).
- 1) 2 Corinthians 11:3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15: "For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."
 - 3) Ephesians 6:11: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."
 - 4) 1 Peter 5:6-9: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."
- h. We are given assurance that if we resist the devil, he will flee from us. He is not equal with God; he has great power, but is not omnipotent. He is not entirely fearless, for he can be put to flight by the word of God. Our Lord proved that the devil is not invincible. We have the promise that no temptation the devil may offer us is beyond our power to overcome: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*" (1 Cor. 10:12-13). We cannot chase the devil away by any manmade device: "holy water," crosses, icons of "saints," or incantations. Indeed, such contrivances are powerful means of placing the user more fully under the devil's control! All we need to put the devil to flight is the word of God. Christ used it effectively in driving off the devil (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13).
- i. The following information is from the ISBE:
- 1) **Names of Satan**: The word "Satan" is used 24 times in the Old Testament. In Job (Job 1:6f) and Zech (Zech 3:1f) it has the prefixed definite article. In all cases but one when the article is omitted it is used in a general sense. This one exception is 1 Chron 21:1 (compare 2 Sam 24:1), where the word is generally conceded to be used as a proper name. This meaning is fixed in New Testament times. We are thus enabled to note in the term "Satan" (and Devil) the growth of a word from a general term to an appellation and later to a proper name. All the other names of Satan save only these two are descriptive titles. In addition to these two principal names a number of others deserve specific enumeration. Tempter (Matt 4:5; 1 Thess 3:5); Beelzebub (Matt 12:24); Enemy (Matt 13:39); Evil One (Matt 13:19,38; 1 John 2:13-14; 3:12, and particularly 5:18); Belial (2 Cor 6:15); Adversary (*antidikos*), (1 Peter 5:8); Deceiver (literally "the one who deceives") (Rev 12:9); Dragon (Great) (Rev 12:3); Father of Lies (John 8:44); Murderer (John 8:44); Sinner (1 John 3:8)—these are isolated references occurring from 1 to 3 times each. In the vast majority of passages (70 out of 83) either Satan or Devil is used.

- 2) **Character of Satan:** Satan is consistently represented in the New Testament as the enemy both of God and man. The popular notion is that Satan is the enemy of man and active in misleading and cursing humanity because of his intense hatred and opposition to God. Matt 13:39 would seem to point in this direction, but if one were to venture an opinion in a region where there are not enough facts to warrant a conviction, it would be that the general tenor of Scripture indicates quite the contrary, namely, that Satan's jealousy and hatred of men has led him into antagonism to God and, consequently, to goodness. The fundamental moral description of Satan is given by our Lord when He describes Satan as the "evil one" (Matt 13:19,38; compare Isaiah's description of Yahweh as the "Holy One," Isa 1:4 and often); that is, the one whose nature and will are given to evil. Moral evil is his controlling attribute. It is evident that this description could not be applied to Satan as originally created. Ethical evil cannot be concreated. It is the creation of each free will for itself. We are not told in definite terms how Satan became the evil one, but certainly it could be by no other process than a fall, whereby, in the mystery of free personality, an evil will takes the place of a good one.
- 3) **Works of Satan:** The world-wide and age-long works of Satan are to be traced to one predominant motive. He hates both God and man and does all that in him lies to defeat God's plan of grace and to establish and maintain a kingdom of evil, in the seduction and ruin of mankind. The balance and sanity of the Bible is nowhere more strikingly exhibited than in its treatment of the work of Satan. Not only is the Bible entirely free from the extravagances of popular Satanology, which is full of absurd stories concerning the appearances, tricks, and transformations of Satan among men, but it exhibits a dependable accuracy and consistency, of statement which is most reassuring. Almost nothing is said concerning Satanic agency other than wicked men who mislead other men. In the controversy with His opponents concerning exorcism (Mark 3:22f and parallels) our Lord rebuts their slanderous assertion that He is in league with Satan by the simple proposition that Satan does not work against himself. But in so saying He does far more than refute this slander. He definitely aligns the Bible against the popular idea that a man may make a definite and conscious personal alliance with Satan for any purpose whatever. The agent of Satan is always a victim. Also the hint contained in this discussion that Satan has a kingdom, together with a few other not very definite allusions, are all that we have to go upon in this direction. Nor are we taught anywhere that Satan is able to any extent to introduce disorder into the physical universe or directly operate in the lives of men. It is true that in Luke 13:16 our Lord speaks of the woman who was bowed over as one "whom Satan has bound, lo, these eighteen years," and that in 2 Cor 12:7 Paul speaks of his infirmity as a "messenger of Satan sent to buffet him." Paul also speaks (1 Thess 2:18) of Satan's hindering him from visiting the church at Thessalonica. A careful study of these related passages (together with the prologue of Job) will reveal the fact that Satan's direct agency in the physical world is very limited. Satan may be said to be implicated in all the disasters and woes of human life, in so far as they are more or less directly contingent upon sin (see particularly Heb 2:14).
- a) On the contrary, it is perfectly evident that Satan's power consists principally in his ability to deceive. It is interesting and characteristic that according to the Bible Satan is fundamentally a liar and his kingdom is a kingdom founded upon lies and deceit. The doctrine of Satan therefore corresponds in every important particular to the general Biblical emphasis upon truth. "The truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)—this is the way of deliverance from the power of Satan. Now it would seem that to make Satan pre-eminently the deceiver would make man an innocent victim and thus relax the moral issue. But according to the Bible man is *particeps criminis* in the process of his own deception. He is deceived only because he ceases to love the truth and comes first to love and then to believe a lie (2 Cor 1:10). This really goes to the very bottom of the problem of temptation....Since temptation consists in this
-

attack upon the moral sense, man is constitutionally guarded against deceit, and is morally culpable in allowing himself to be deceived. The temptation of our Lord Himself throws the clearest possible light upon the methods ascribed to Satan and The temptation was addressed to Christ's consciousness of divine sonship; it was a deceitful attack emphasizing the good, minimizing or covering up the evil; indeed, twisting evil into good. It was a deliberate, malignant attempt to obscure the truth and induce to evil through the acceptance of falsehood....The lie was punctured by the truth and the temptation lost its power....This incident reveals one of the methods of Satan—by immediate suggestion as in the case of Judas (Luke 22:3; John 13:2,27).

- b) Sometimes, however, and, perhaps, most frequently, Satan's devices (2 Cor 2:11) include human agents. Those who are given over to evil and who persuade others to evil are children and servants of Satan (See Matt 16:23; Mark 8:33; Luke 4:8; John 6:70; 8:44; Acts 13:10; 1 John 3:8). Satan also works through persons and institutions supposed to be on the side of right but really evil. Here the same ever-present and active falseness and deceit are exhibited. When he is called "the god of this world" (2 Cor 4:4) it would seem to be intimated that he has the power to clothe himself in apparently divine attributes. He also makes himself an angel of light by presenting advocates of falsehood in the guise of apostles of truth (2 Cor 11:13,15; 1 John 4:1; 2 Thess 2:9; Rev 12:9; 19:20). In the combination of passages here brought together, it is clearly indicated that Satan is the instigator and fomentor of that spirit of lawlessness which exhibits itself as hatred both of truth and right, and which has operated so widely and so disastrously in human life.
- 4) **History of Satan:** The history of Satan, including that phase of it which remains to be realized, can be set forth only along the most general lines. He belongs to the angelic order of beings. He is by nature one of the sons of Elohim (Job 1:6). He has fallen, and by virtue of his personal forcefulness has become the leader of the anarchic forces of wickedness. As a free being he has merged his life in evil and has become altogether and hopelessly evil. As a being of high intelligence he has gained great power and has exercised a wide sway over other beings. As a created being the utmost range of his power lies within the compass of that which is permitted. It is, therefore, hedged in by the providential government of God and essentially limited. The Biblical emphasis upon the element of falsehood in the career of Satan might be taken to imply that his kingdom may be less in extent than appears. At any rate, it is confined to the cosmic sphere and to a limited portion of time.
- 5) It is also doomed. In the closely related passages 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude verse 6 it is affirmed that God cast the angels, when they sinned, down to Tartarus and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment. This both refers to the constant divine control of these insurgent forces and also points to their final and utter destruction. The putting of Satan in bonds is evidently both constant and progressive. The essential limitation of the empire of evil and its ultimate overthrow are foreshadowed in the Book of Job (chapters 38-41), where Yahweh's power extends even to the symbolized spirit of evil.
- a) (O)ur Lord in the crisis of temptation immediately following the baptism (Matt 4 and parallel) met and for the time conquered Satan as His own personal adversary. This preliminary contest did not close the matter, but was the earnest of a complete victory. According to Lk (Luke 10:18), when the Seventy returned from their mission flushed with victory over the powers of evil, Jesus said: 'I saw Satan fall (not "fallen"; see Plummer, "Luke," International Critical Commentary, in loc.) as lightning from heaven.' In every triumph over the powers of evil Christ beheld in vision the downfall of Satan. In connection with the coming of the Hellenists who wished to see Him, Jesus asserted (John 12:31), "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." In view of His approaching passion He says again

(John 14:30), "The prince of the world cometh: and he hath nothing in me." Once again in connection with the promised advent of the Spirit, Jesus asserted (John 16:11) that the Spirit would convict the world of judgment, "because the prince of this world hath been judged."

- b) In He (Heb 2:14-15) it is said that Christ took upon Himself human nature in order "that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil." In 1 John 3:8 it is said, "To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil." In Rev 12:9 it is asserted, in connection with Christ's ascension, that Satan was cast down to the earth and his angels with him. According to the passage immediately following (12:10-12), this casting down was not complete or final in the sense of extinguishing his activities altogether, but it involves the potential and certain triumph of God and His saints and the equally certain defeat of Satan. In 1 John 2:13 the young men are addressed as those who "have overcome the evil one." In Rev 20 the field of the future is covered in the assertion that Satan is "bound a thousand years"; then loosed "for a little time," and then finally "cast into the lake of fire."
 - c) A comparison of these passages will convince the careful student that while we cannot construct a definite chronological program for the career of Satan, we are clear in the chief points. He is limited, judged, condemned, imprisoned, reserved for judgment from the beginning. The outcome is certain though the process may be tedious and slow. The victory of Christ is the defeat of Satan....[International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1996 by BibleSoft].
4. Verse 8: "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded."
- a. We drive the devil away by resisting him; we draw God near to us by drawing near to God. As the statement of verse seven denotes an obligation on our part, so the statement of this verse is also an obligation we have. We must submit ourselves to God; we must resist the devil; we must draw near to God.
 - b. God did not move away from man; man moved away from God by choosing to live in rebellion to God's will.
 - 1) Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear."
 - 2) Romans 3:10-23: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet *are* swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
 - c. Reconciliation with God requires the individual to be personally involved.
 - 1) God has done his part to make reconciliation possible: "Therefore being justified by faith, we
-

have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only *so*, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Rom. 5:1-11; cf. John 3:16; Rom. 1:16-17; Mark 16:15-16).

2) Our role is the easy part.

- a) 2 Chronicles 15:2: "And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD *is* with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you."
 - b) Isaiah 55:6-7 "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."
 - c) Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - d) Acts 2:38-40: "Then Peter said unto them, 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. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation."
 - e) 2 Corinthians 5:18-20: "And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."
 - f) Ephesians 2:12-16: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."
 - g) Revelation 22:17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."
- d. Sinners are told to cleanse their hands—a figure of speech. “Hands” is used to represent the tools with which we work. Sinful practices must be discarded. The passage is directed toward wayward saints, but alien sinners must also quit their evil practices (in repentance) before their obedience to the gospel is effective. Neither Pilate nor the Pharisees could cleanse themselves of sin by washing their hands

with water (Matt. 27:24; 15:1-20).

- 1) Matthew 27:24: "When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 6:17: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you."
 - 3) Colossians 3:8: "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
 - 5) Ephesians 5:5: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."
 - 6) Colossians 3:5: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."
 - 7) 1 John 1:8-10: "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. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
- e. The double-minded are told to purify their hearts. Again, the author is addressing wayward members of the Lord's church. The double-minded man is trying to go two separate directions at the same time; he is one who prays but has no faith in prayer. A circus performer could not ride two horses at once which were traveling in opposite directions. A Christian cannot follow the world and be obedient to God at the same time.
- 1) Matthew 6:19-24: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
 - 2) James 1:5-8: "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."
- f. "To purify the heart has particular reference to the *seat* and *source* of sin in the individual; to cleanse the hands to the performance of the *acts* of sin [quit sinning—bw]. The heart is the spring of evil; the hands are (figuratively) the instruments by which the purposes of the sinful heart are accomplished. Thus, both the *source* and the *means* of sin are to be purged, if one is to receive the blessings of grace earlier promised by James. As the reference to *hands* is without the article, so also is the word 'hearts' without it. Hence, cleanse hands, purify hearts" (Woods, p.231).
- g. Faithful Christians draw near to God as they offer scriptural worship; but one who offers unscriptural worship does not approach God's presence, even though he may be sincere in his devotions.
- 1) Exodus 19:22: "And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them."
 - 2) Leviticus 10:1-2: "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and

put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD."

- 3) Matthew 15:7-14: "*Ye* hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men. And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."
- 4) Mark 7:7-13: "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is* Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free*. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."
- 5) John 4:23-24: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
- 6) Acts 17:22-23: "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, *Ye* men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."
- 7) 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."
- 8) Hebrews 13:15: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name."
- h. Since God is all-knowing, there is nothing he does not know which he chooses to know; since he is all-powerful, there nothing he cannot do which he chooses to do and which is consistent with his nature; since God is omnipresent, there is no place where his presence is not.
 - 1) Psalms 139:7-10: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*. If I take the wings of the morning, *and* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."
 - 2) We cannot draw near to him physically for he is a spiritual being and dwells in heaven, but he is not far from any of us.
 - a) Deuteronomy 4:7: "For what nation *is there so great*, who *hath* God *so* nigh unto them, as the LORD our God *is* in all *things that we call upon him for?*"
 - b) Jeremiah 23:23: "*Am* I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off?"

- c) Acts 17:24-31: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
- 3) But through study of his word and other acts of authorized worship, we are near to God; as we walk in the light of the gospel (1 John 1:5-10), we are near to God. "We are not from thence to infer that only on such occasions [of worship] do we draw near him; we have seen that the tense of the verb 'draw nigh' suggests a once-for-all act, and refers to a definite and decisive action in which one puts sin and satan away, and comes to God. The verb is intransitive; the action is, therefore, man's; while God draws by incentive, it is man's responsibility to come to God. Of some Jesus affirmed, 'And ye will not come to me, that ye may have life.' (John 5:40)" (Woods, p.228).
- i. God will draw nigh to us if we draw nigh to him. Those who neglect or refuse to draw near to God cannot expect to be blessed by the Lord, here or in eternity. The obligation is binding and personal; the individual must consciously and sincerely make the decision. "The verb here is future; and, the promise conditional" (ibid.).
- 1) 2 Chronicles 15:2: "And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD *is* with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you."
 - 2) Isaiah 55:6-7: "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."
 - 3) John 6:37: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."
 - 4) Romans 11:22: "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."
 - 5) Hebrews 10:22: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."
5. Verses 9-10: "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."
- a. James is not calling on them to abuse themselves physically over their sins; such actions could not make them more pleasing to God or more spiritual. It also violates the divine injunction against "voluntary humility." "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind...Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh" (Col. 2:18,23).
- 1) Paul warned the Colossian brethren against being taken in by false piety. The gnostics, even in

the early stages of their development, put on a show of false humility and claimed to have superior knowledge. They looked down on the humble servant of Christ who was living by the gospel. This is the way modern false teachers operate. Those who assert they have received Holy Spirit baptism manifest a haughty attitude, thinking they are superior to one who is simply walking in the light of the gospel. Holy Spirit baptism was promised only to the apostles; it was never intended for the general membership then or for anyone today.

- 2) The gnostics pretended to know more and be greater than others, but Paul exposes their error as being a false humility. Instead of having genuine humility, they exalted themselves as being better, knowing more, and possessing greater advantages than the average member. "Self-imposed acts of mortification of the body, as service to God, was the outward evidence of false humility, and points to something blameworthy; a false and perverted lowliness, which deemed that God was so inaccessible that he could only be approached through the mediation of inferior beings" (David Lipscomb, *Commentary on Colossians*, p.283).
- 3) In the light of Colossians 2:23, consider those who inhabit monasteries. These monks sacrifice their comfort and even some of the essentials of life, in order to assert their greatness. As with the gnostics, their attempts to demonstrate humility become a haughty show of the opposite! In each case, the foolish, fleshly heart is vainly puffed up with itself.
 - a) Romans 8:7: "Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 3:1-4: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"
- 4) Neglecting the body or abusing the body is no insurance against indulging in the lusts of the flesh. "These things may have a show of humility and wisdom, so far as self-imposed worship and humility and severity of the body are concerned; but they are of no value or worth whatever as a safeguard against any real temptation to bodily indulgence. Ascetic observances do not make a man pure or shield him against fleshly temptations and indulgences" (Lipscomb, *ibid.*, p.287).
- b. James calls on the brethren to apprehend the enormity of sin (cf. Isa. 59:1-2; Rom. 3:23; 6:23). When one sees the awfulness of his personal sins he will have repentance. Repentance is produced by godly sorrow and results in a reformed life.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 7:9-10: "I now rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry unto repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly sort, that ye might suffer loss by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, *a repentance* which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (ASV).
 - 2) Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."
 - 3) Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
 - 4) Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - 5) Godly sorrow is essential before there can be any repentance—in an alien sinner or in a wayward child of God. Sorrow is unpleasant. This is the kind of spiritual affliction James counsels the brethren to obtain.

- 6) When Peter finally perceived his enormous transgression in denying his knowledge of Christ, he went out and wept bitterly (Matt. 26:75).
 - 7) The mourning specified in the Lord's beatiude is that which produces repentance: "Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5:4).
- c. Sin cannot be hidden from God or from all men. One may fool some of the people some of the time, but no one can fool all of the people all of the time; no one can fool God at any time.
- 1) A married man from South Carolina and his girl friend faked their deaths; they got away with it for a while, until some former associates recognized them in the vast crowd at DisneyWorld. "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out" (Num. 32:23).
 - 2) Proverbs 15:3: "The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good."
 - 3) Hebrews 4:13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
 - 4) Revelation 6:12-17: "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"
- d. Verse 10 describes one who truly repents. Paul in Damascus is a fitting example of repentance: "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: *it is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink" (Acts 9:3-9).
- e. Repentance must follow us daily as we live the Christian life, for we all live imperfect lives, and we frequently leave undone what we ought to have done:
- 1) James 4:17: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin."
 - 2) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 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. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
- f. "The spirit of humility is peculiarly characteristic of all faithful disciples and is enjoined again and again in the sacred writings. (Matt. 23:12; 18:3.)....
- 1) "Humility is the voluntary acceptance of a place of lowliness in order to be pleasing to God. While James had in mind humility in the act of repentance here, humility of life is repeatedly taught in the New Testament....
-

- 2) "It is possible for one to appear humble when the motive is not right; to be acceptable, it must be for the purpose of pleasing God, and not in order to obtain the plaudits of men.
 - 3) "We have, in the story of the prodigal son, a splendid example of humility and contrition. Said he, when he had come to himself in the far country, 'I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight; I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.' (Luke 15:18,19.) And, as the father rejoiced to have his lost son return, so God will gladly receive and restore and exalt his returning prodigals" (Woods, pp.234f).
- g. James tells us that true humility will result in our being exalted by the Father. This the Lord taught in Matthew 23:12: "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." No one can be humble for another; by its very nature, it is an individual trait that must be personally cultivated and expressed.
- 1) Matthew 6:5-6: "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."
 - 2) Luke 18:10-14: "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."
 - 3) 1 Peter 5:5-6: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." To be clothed with humility is to "'tie on humility like a slave's apron.' The saints were thus to array themselves in humility; to tie it on securely like a garment so that it might never fall away. Peter probably had a vivid mental picture of the Lord's action when he tied a towel about him and washed the disciples' feet, as he penned these words. (John 13:10-17.) The statements of Peter and James are almost identical here" (Woods, p.235).
- h. In Psalm 51, a passage in which David reflects on his grievous sins in the case of Bathsheba, in a manner of speaking, God opens the sweet psalmist's heart, and shows us how repentance works in the heart of a truly penitent individual. David recovered from this heinous crime, and served God well for many more years.
6. Verse 11: "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge."
- a. The subject of the wrongful use of the tongue arises again. More space is occupied in this epistle on this subject than on any other. This indicates the inclination on the part of his readers to fall victim to this sin, and thus James addressed the subject in a very strong way. This is a serious spiritual crime today, as it was then.
 - b. He strongly cautions the brethren against speaking evil of one another. James "had discussed, in detail, in the verses preceding, the sins which result from an absence of love for God; here he gives attention to those sins which follow from a lack of love for the brethren. It is, of course, the want of
-

love for each other that prompts us to express adverse judgments regarding others. We are all especially prone to make excuses for those whom we appreciate and love; to excuse, justify and forgive them for their weaknesses; and to criticise, condemn and flay those whom we dislike....One may speak evil of another by unjustly criticising his actions, words, life; by taking up evil reports originated by others against a brother and giving them further circulation. All such censorious activity is sinful and wrong" (Woods, p.237).

- 1) 1 John 2:10-11: "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes."
 - 2) 1 John 4:20-21: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."
- c. A spiritually-minded person will not even entertain the desire to harm his brother by speaking evil against him. The tense of the verbs indicates habitual practice, not mere occasional lapses. "LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. *He that* backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour" (Psa. 15:1-3).
- d. James affirms that one who speaks evil of his brother and thus condemns his brother, in the same action also speaks evil of the law and condemns the law. Evil speaking is forbidden by God's law; rather, love is required. One who engages in this sin is at cross purposes with God's word, and thus condemns and repudiates the very law he claims to follow. It is to say, in effect, that God's will for us to love each other is not good and can be disregarded.
- 1) Psalms 19:13: "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous *sins*; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."
 - 2) Luke 7:29-30: "And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him."
- e. "The 'judging,' which is condemned here is censorious judgment, a type of ill-natured criticism resulting from hasty and imperfect conceptions, and based upon partial or incorrect information. There is, in the effort, an allegation of superiority, the implication that the one doing it is better, more intelligent, possessed of greater wisdom than others.
- 1) "The critic thus becomes a judge, not exercising his judgment in a specific realm, and with reference to detailed charges established by testimony from credible and competent witnesses, but from surmise, suspicion, and malice. This is a palpable and strict violation of the law of love. (Luke 19:18.) It is the responsibility of us all to obey the law of God, and not violate it, or attempt to pass judgment as to its worth or validity. The law contemplated here is doubtless the law of Christ....
 - 2) "The tense of the verbs here used indicates, not an occasional lapse into this sin, but a constant and habitual addiction thereto. Such appears to have been characteristic of those to whom James wrote; and it is not surprising, because those who speak evil of others occasionally, will eventually fall into the harmful habit of doing it continuously" (Woods, pp.239f).
- f. James accuses the guilty individual of being a judge of God's law, and not a doer of the law. There are cases where the right kind of judging is necessary, even required; but there are other kinds of judging which are strictly forbidden. Wisdom and knowledge of God's word can determine the case.
- 1) Matthew 7:1-6: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest

thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." We are required to pass judgment in order to identify spiritual dogs and swine; we are not to pass harsh, unfair, or hypocritical judgments.

- 2) John 7:24: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." A judgment based merely on outward appearances is apt to be wrong; righteous judgments are the kind we are required to pass.
 - 3) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." False teachers can be identified; this judgment is required and is not wrong.
 - 4) 2 Thessalonians 3:6: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." We could not withdraw fellowship from a rebellious member without the ability and right to pass judgment. Passing judgment is necessary to establish the fact that the brother is walking disorderly.
 - 5) 1 Timothy 4:7: "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself *rather* unto godliness." We can sinlessly identify these kinds of fables.
 - 6) 1 Timothy 5:20: "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."
 - 7) Titus 1:13: "This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith."
 - 8) Titus 3:10: "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject."
 - 9) 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
- g. The law referred to is the gospel. "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer. 31:31-33; cf. Heb. 8:1-13; Acts 4:11-12).
7. Verse 12: "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?"
 - a. The one lawgiver and judge is Christ. He operates under the direct authority of the Father.
 - 1) Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - 2) John 6:68-69: "Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."
 - 3) John 12:48-50: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."
-

- 4) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 5) Acts 17:30-31: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
 - 6) Hebrews 1:1-4: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."
 - 7) 1 Corinthians 15:24-28: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
- b. The principle of the passage may be violated by legislating where God has not, by enacting laws which violate what God has said, by trying to make void some part of God's will, or by watering-down the truth.
- 1) Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil."
 - 2) Acts 5:29: "Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."
 - 3) Galatians 1:8-9: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
 - 5) 2 John 9: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son" (ASV).
 - 6) Revelation 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."
- c. Christ is able to save or destroy. "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28; cf. Luke 12:4-5). "There is no other empowered to save the soul or to cast it down to hell....Since he alone is thus empowered, it is presumptuous for another or others to attempt to usurp his prerogative of
-

making laws and of serving as judges in his realm. In his hands alone has God placed such powers; and he alone has the right to legislate in matters affecting the weal and woe of human beings. From this we learn that, (1) our Lord is *able*; vouchsafed to him is sufficient power to accomplish fully the will of God concerning him and us (Matt. 28:18-20.); (2) he is able *to save* (*sozo*), to deliver us from the guilt, the power, the pollution, and eventually, from the presence of sin, and to enable us to enjoy the bliss of heaven throughout eternity; (3) he is able *to destroy* (*appolumi*, to render useless). The verb does not denote annihilation, as is sometimes argued by materialists; it is the Greek adjective for the condition of the prodigal son in Luke 15, when he was said to be *lost*, i.e., completely alienated from his father and his father's house. The word does not mean extinction or non-existence when affirmed of the wicked; the Scriptures plainly teach that such will exist in a conscious state, and be punished, throughout all eternity. (Mark 9:42-50; Rev. 20:10-15.)" (Woods, p.234).

- 1) Mark 9:42-50: "And whosoever shall offend one of *these* little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt *is* good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another."
 - 2) Revelation 20:10-15: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
- d. Who are we to judge [to consign someone to *Gehenna*]? What right does any human being have to infringe on God's domain? We are not equipped or authorized to thus exalt ourselves to Christ's seat. It is not our function to promote ourselves to the position of either lawgiver or judge.
- 1) Romans 14:4: "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand."
 - 2) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
- e. We are not permitted to speak against our brother. "The *judging* forbidden is the running down of another (*katalaei*, to speak against, or down upon); those forbidden to do it are all disciples; the 'neighbor' (*ton plesion*) is, literally, one near us, and then anybody, whether saint or sinner" (Woods, p.243).
- 1) We are required to judge righteous judgments: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). A situation that appears so wrong on the outside, may indeed

be completely innocent; things are not always what they appear to be.

- 2) We are at liberty to inspect fruit: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:15-20).
- 3) We have the right to exhort our brethren: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12).
- 4) We are told to admonish: "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*" (1 Thess. 5:14).
- 5) We are to teach others: "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness....Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 6:3,17).

C. James 4:13-16: Presumptuous Over-Confidence.

1. Verses 13-14: "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."
 - a. Perhaps all languages have an audible device by which attention is called to a particular statement about to be made. We use certain expressions to that end: *Come now! Listen! See here!* The KJV has one here that is similar to these: "Go to now." James uses this means to call attention to an important matter. This is just another in a rather long list of items in which the brethren needed instruction and correction.
 - b. "Dependence on God is the most fundamental premise of Christianity; the disposition to leave him out of our affairs is gross indifference; and, when to this is added the feeling that he is not *needed* in such plans, the attitude is godless in nature" (Woods, p.245).
 - 1) Some of the brethren had been making great plans regarding business ventures which did not include any consideration of God's will. They stated bluntly that they would go to a certain city, remain there for a specified time, and in the process obtain a substantial profit. This was a presumptuous attitude on their part; they did not see the need to invoke God's assistance; they did not take into account any outside hindrance that might interfere with their carefully laid strategy.
 - 2) There was nothing wrong with their careful planning; their error was in leaving God out of their plans. They thought they could take care of all their own needs. The humanists of our time assert boldly that there is no God to aid mankind, and that man must tend to his own needs. What a cold and meaningless philosophy! How empty! How foolish and blind! Proof of God's existence abounds throughout nature; the Bible can easily be proved to be his inspired word; the evidence is of such clear and definite nature, that only a foolish man would deny God's existence (Ps. 14:1); the Bible affirms that an unbeliever is without any excuse for his infidelity (Rom. 1:20).
 - a) Psalms 14:1: "The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good."
 - b) Romans 1:20: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."
 - 3) This is a very common mistake being made by prosperous Americans of our day. One of the prime

reasons why the pure gospel has such little appeal to the worldly-minded ones is their faulty view that they can take care of their own needs; or else they can place their trust in the public dole. If a man thinks that he can provide for all of his physical needs, he will see no need for God's help. To be sure, if he gets into a dangerous situation, he will call for God's help; but when he has all that he thinks he needs, God is not important in his thinking. Moreover, many in the Lord's church have not learned to depend on God or include him in their plans.

- 4) Prosperous times hold more dangers for the soul than times of turmoil, poverty, and hardship. The rich farmer of the Lord's parable fell into the grievous error of this passage: "And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry. But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:15-21).
- 5) A great tragedy struck America yesterday, September 11, 2001. Terrorists hi-jacked four airliners and caused two of them to crash into the World Trade Center Towers in New York City and another into the Pentagon in Washington—apparently with great loss of life; the fourth crashed in open country. This sinful and violent act of hatred may cause some Americans to open their eyes to the truth. The event demonstrates clearly that economic prosperity cannot protect against a determined enemy. Perhaps many will now perceive the need for God's help.
- c. No mortal can know what shall occur tomorrow. "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1). This proverb does not argue against good planning for the future, but warns against having overconfidence in what we shall do tomorrow (Jas. 4:13-14). Earthly life is very uncertain, with many potential dangers, including disease, accident, actions of other people, weather, political turmoil, and death.
 - 1) Farmers must act in the spring as if there will be a harvest in the fall. Manufacturers must plan today for the products they expect to sell later. Families must act and plan for the tomorrow so as to be prepared for the future. But these are matters of good sense, and do not violate the precept of this verse.
 - 2) If we should grow arrogant and self-sufficient, and think that we have a firm grasp on the future, our pomposity will likely bring us grief. One who boasts about what he will do tomorrow, may very well be condemning himself.
 - a) Luke 12:15-21: "And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."
 - b) Luke 17:26-29: "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it

was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.”

- c) 2 Samuel 3:9-10: “So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as the LORD hath sworn to David, even so I do to him; To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba.”
 - d) 2 Samuel 3:27: “And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth rib, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.”
 - e) Esther 5:12: “Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to morrow am I invited unto her also with the king.”
 - f) Esther 7:1-10: “So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen. And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom. Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request: For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage. Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so? And Esther said, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen. And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath went into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen; for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king. Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther was. Then said the king, Will he force the queen also before me in the house? As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon. So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.”
- 3) If we wait until tomorrow to obey God, we might be waiting too long. "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).
- d. James describes the extent of a man's life as being exceedingly short: it is like a vapor that for a little time appears, but soon vanishes. Every knowledgeable person is aware of his mortality, but in youthful years he is especially prone to think that death comes to old folks only or to the *other fellow*. The average person, perhaps, having lived through many illnesses and escaped many dangers, begins to think that such will ever be his fortune; although he understands he is a mortal being, he likes to think that he will be spared for “a few more years.” Edward Gibbon, who wrote a monumental work on the Roman Empire, remarked to some friends one evening that he expected to live for fifteen more years; he was dead before the dawn of the next day. Multitudes of individuals act as if there will always be a tomorrow because of all of the morrows that came to them in the past. But we are assured of only the present moment, not the next.
 - 1) Job 7:6-10: "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope. O remember that my life *is* wind: mine eye shall no more see good. The eye of him that hath seen me shall see
-

- me no *more*: thine eyes *are* upon me, and I *am* not. *As* the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no *more*. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more."
- 2) Job 14:1-2: "Man *that is* born of a woman *is* of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not."
 - 3) Psalms 90:10,12: "The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years, yet *is* their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away....So teach *us* to number our days, that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 6:6-10: "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 6:1-2: "We then, *as* workers together *with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation)."
 - 6) Hebrews 9:27-28: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."
- e. A little puff-ball of a cloud appears in the sky; one moment it is not there, the next moment it has appeared; in another short space of time it disappears. The vapor of a man's life appears for a little time and then disappears. "Nothing is more unsubstantial than a vapor, and it is an excellent representation of the brevity of life, and the fleeting and unstable existence characteristic of all of us here....The transitoriness of life and the inevitability of death are familiar themes to all Bible students. Again and again the writers thereof have commented on this fact and have sought to impress us, with vivid figures, to this end. Life is by them compared to water spilled on the ground, to a flying shadow which flits across the sky and in whose shade the toiler rests briefly and looks up only to find that it has flown away; to a frail and fragile flower; to sleep, to a dream, to a handbreadth, to a shepherd's tent which has been removed, to a tale that is told, to a long journey one is about to undertake. These are Inspiration's answers to the question, *What is your life?*" (Woods, p.249).
 - f. Death is in the best interest of earthly life. Without death, the wicked would only grow more wicked; those in pain would only have increased agony, without any escape; those in great sorrow could only look forward to greater sorrow; those who are sick would get sicker. Evil and suffering would intensify, and there would be no relief. On the other hand, for a faithful child of God, death is the ultimate doorway to the utopia of Heaven! In heaven there is none of the sorrows or evils which prevail here: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4). It is no wonder, therefore, why God made the statement of Psalms 116:15: "Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the death of his saints."
2. Verses 15-16: "For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.
 - a. Instead of being presumptuous about our expectations for the future, we ought to say, "If the Lord will, we will...." This expression was not intended to be a "magic phrase" for this would soon become meaningless and profane. It is especially an attitude of the heart—a constant awareness that God has
-

a hand in the affairs of men; we would not want it otherwise. As faithful saints walk in the light of God's word, we will always endeavor to keep the will of God in mind as we make our plans; we understand that his will must always be paramount.

- b. References are made to God's will many times in the Bible; indeed, the Bible is the record of his will. But there is also, what we might call, *the providential will of God*. As we walk in the light of the gospel (1 John 1:7), we are fellow-workers with God; he works with us and helps us: "We then, *as workers together with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor. 6:1). There are some activities which we may do that are pleasing to him and which we perceive as being supportive of his work. We may not always know for certain whether a given activity is the right thing for us to do, so we pray that God's will be done.
 - 1) Acts 18:21: "But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, **if God will**. And he sailed from Ephesus."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 4:19: "But I will come to you shortly, **if the Lord will**, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 16:7: "For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, **if the Lord permit**."
- c. The boasting [*vauntings*—ASV] "denotes insolent, arrogant and empty assurance; the disposition to ignore God in life's affairs, and to live with the assumption that man alone is the architect of his fortunes. This description of the attitude characteristic of those to whom James wrote contrasts sharply with that which is proper and right, and which he urges in verse 15. Theirs was a boastful attitude; they not only felt sufficient, they sought to leave the impression upon all others that they were wholly so, and were thus without any need of God in their affairs! Such self-glorification was high-handed presumption; a deliberate effort to exclude God from their lives. The etymology of the word translated 'vauntings,' suggests a calculated effort on their part to claim sufficiency without God. It is significant that in its only other occurrence in the New Testament, it appears in the phrase, 'the vainglory of life.' (1 John 1:16.)" (Woods, p.251).
- d. James declares that all such glorying is evil.
 - 1) Some glorying (rejoicing) is good: "For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" (1 Thess. 2:19; cf. Gal. 6:14).
 - 2) Some glorying (rejoicing) is evil: "Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (1 Cor. 5:6).

D. James 4:17: The Sin of Omission.

1. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin."
2. The word "therefore" indicates a connection between the conclusion reached here and the preceding principles. The truth of the verse is not to be limited to the immediate context, for by its very nature, it has application to all those cases where one is aware of his duties before God, and does not do them. The same principle, variously expressed, appears in other passages:
 - a. Luke 12:47-48: "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."
 - b. John 9:41: "Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." If they were physically blind but were willing to understand, accept, and believe the truth when they heard it, they would be without sin—they would believe and obey the requirements of God and thus be saved. But they arrogantly asserted that they already had complete

- and accurate understanding of God's will, and would not learn from the Master Teacher—therefore, they remained in sin.
- c. John 13:17: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." No state of blessing pertains to one who will not do that which he knows to be right. But one who will do what is right (be obedient to the will of God), that person is happy (blessed).
 - d. John 15:22: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin." If they had not heard the truth which the Savior presented to them, they could have continued in their ignorance; they would have known the truth. Their ignorance would not have made their sinful condition less sinful, but the added light he gave them regarding spiritual truths would make them even more sinful if they chose to repudiate it. If he had not taught them, they would not have been guilty of sinning against the greater light they now had. One who is an honest man, but who is ignorantly in sin, will either cease to be in sin (for he will obey the truth) or else he will cease to be an honest man (for he will shun the truth, and willfully continue in his error).
3. If one knows his duty, but refuses or neglects to do it, he increases his guilt.
 - a. Ezekiel 3:17-19: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."
 - b. James 3:1: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation."
 - c. Romans 14:23: "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin." This passage establishes "the fact that (a) a knowledge of what is right creates the obligation to discharge the duty involved in it; and (b) doubt regarding the propriety of an act necessitates abstinence from it. One sins in doing that which is of doubtful propriety; one sins in knowing an act is obligatory, yet does not perform it" (Woods, p.253).
 4. "There is obviously some connection between the section preceding, and this affirmation; but it is not to be restricted to the context or limited to the matters just discussed. It would appear that it was James' design to show that these who were given to insolent and arrogant expressions of self-sufficiency and who refused to acknowledge providence in their affairs were those who affected to be best informed in what is right and hence merely compounded their guilt in their refusal to 'do good.'" (Woods, p.253).
 5. A common mistake observable in our society, with regards to spiritual values, is the assumption that individuals are good simply because they do not do evil. Just because a man is not a bankrobber does not make him a good father or a faithful Christian. No good father or faithful Christian will rob banks, but there must be positive goodness, which results from doing what is good.
 - a. "Every judgment parable in the New Testament reveals that the punishment meted out was not for something *bad* the individual involved *did*, but something *good* he did *not* do. It is affirmed of the one-talent man that he was 'wicked.' It is quite obvious that this word is used in this parable in a sense wholly foreign to our usage today. A wicked person is, in our view, one who *does bad things*. Nothing of an evil character whatsoever is affirmed of him. We have often said that were we required to defend him in a legal action today, by obtaining a jury of brethren, we would most likely get a verdict in his favor!" (Woods, p.255).
 - b. There are many evil things which the one-talent man did not do: he was not a murderer; he did not steal; he was not guilty of taking the Lord's name in vain—the Record does not accuse him of any of these. But he is described as wicked.
-

6. The barren fig tree illustrates the truth of the text: "And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away" (Matt. 21:19). The fig tree of that land first put on its fruit before putting forth leaves; when one saw a fig tree with leaves, the natural presumption was that it also had figs. Our Lord pronounced a curse upon this particular tree because it had leaves but no fruit. He used this as an object lesson for his disciples who think they can be pleasing by only putting on an outward appearance of righteousness. The heart must be converted and dedicated to the Lord; this inner condition will be demonstrated in outward obedience.
 7. The Lord's depiction of the Great Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46) furnishes abundant proof of James' maxim. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
 8. Many other statements of the divine record show the necessity of doing God's will:
 - a. Matthew 7:21-27: "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 which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."
 - b. Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
 - c. Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
-

JAMES 5

A. James 5:1-6: Warning to the Rich.

1. Verse 1: "Go to now, *ye* rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you."
 - a. The rich were addressed in James 2:7, where they are presented as blasphemers of "that worthy name by the which ye are called." From this reference, we may infer that the rich of the current passage must not be Christians, but people in the world. There is no reason to think that James is speaking to wealthy members of the church, but to enemies of the church. The reason they are given for the weeping and howling prescribed is not in mourning over sin, but over their impending doom. "It would appear that the statement of the inspired writer is an *apostrophe*, wherein he turns aside, for the moment, to denounce the rich and to declare their ultimate doom, for the edification of the poor saints who were experiencing oppression at the hands of the rich" (Woods, p.256).
 - b. The rich are frequently denounced in the Bible, but these are rich people who were also wicked. There are many righteous rich people in the Scriptures also [such as Abraham, Philemon]. Some of the passages in which the wicked rich are opposed are:
 - 1) Proverbs 11:28: "He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch."
 - 2) Isaiah 5:8: "Woe unto them that join house to house, *that* lay field to field, till *there be* no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!"
 - 3) Amos 3:10: "For they know not to do right, saith the LORD, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces."
 - 4) Luke 6:24: "But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation."
 - 5) Luke 18:24: "And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!"
 - 6) 1 Timothy 6:17-19: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."
 - c. "Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny *thee*, and say, Who *is* the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God *in vain*" (Prov. 30:8-9). There is no spiritual merit in being either rich or poor; there are dangers associated with both situations. However, the man of poor means is more likely to understand his need for God. "A rich man may be, and often is, a good man, and a blessing to the world; and, contrariwise, some of the most corrupt characters on earth are poverty-stricken. The state of beggary to which Lazarus was reduced, did not guarantee to him an entrance into Abraham's bosom, nor did the lovely linen garments and the richly laden table of the rich man provide the occasion for his descent into Hades. Riches and poverty are of outward circumstances and not *directly* related to the state of the soul—the determining factor in one's salvation" (Woods, p.257).
 - 1) Mark 10:23-24: "And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!"
 - 2) 3 John 2: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy

soul prospereth."

- 3) Luke 16:19-25: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."
- d. It is short-sighted to think the wicked people of the world, who possess wealth and who have few evident troubles, are better-off than the afflicted saint. Their end must also be considered, as the psalmist noted: "Truly God *is* good to Israel, *even* to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, *when* I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For *there are* no bands in their death: but their strength *is* firm. They *are* not in trouble *as other* men; neither are they plagued like *other* men....Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *then* understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they *brought* into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors" (Ps. 73:1-19).
 - e. The weeping and howling includes the final punishment to be meted out to the wicked in eternity. In such disasters as the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the poor suffered as much as the rich; this is true with other times and circumstances of hardship and suffering—as in natural disasters and war—people from all financial backgrounds suffer in kind. It appears, therefore, that the ruin and trouble envisioned by James are those assigned the lost in eternity. In the destruction of Jerusalem, reliable evidence indicates all the faithful Christians escaped before the full might of Roman power was brought to bear on that rebellious city.
 - 1) Those remaining in the city, rich and poor alike, suffered horrendous punishment: "And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed *are* the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us" (Luke 23:27-30). Josephus reported that more than one million people died in the short siege—under some of the most awful conditions.
 - 2) "In less than ten years, a vengeance was visited upon Jerusalem and the Jews, scarcely paralleled in the world's history. When, at length, the besieged city fell before the conquering legions of Rome, the slaughter that followed was beyond description. Rich and poor were sought out and mercilessly killed; and all, without regard to their material and financial condition, suffered. And, if as we believe, the writer describes the destiny of the rich in judgment, an even more terrible destruction awaits. In view of such a destiny, these ought even now to begin to weep and to howl continuously over their ultimate destiny" (Woods, p.258).
 - f. With the punishment of *Gehenna* as their final and eternal destiny, these wicked rich men are advised to weep and howl in anticipation. The tenses of these verbs show that they are to *begin* to weep and *to continue* to howl over the forthcoming miseries.
 - 1) Matthew 25:30: "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

- 2) Matthew 25:46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
 - 3) Mark 9:48: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."
 - 4) Luke 16:24: "And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."
 - 5) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9: "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
2. Verses 2-3: "Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days."
- a. Riches are neither holy nor unholy; money and other forms of wealth are without any moral value of themselves. A one-dollar bill is only a piece of paper bearing a particular imprint.
 - 1) How that dollar bill was obtained is important to the soul of its owner; if it was gained through stealing, from gambling, or from an immoral transaction, the means of acquiring it being corrupt, the owner is thus corrupted.
 - 2) If the attitude of the owner of that dollar bill is wrong, the love of that money corrupts the owner. If the owner places his trust in that dollar bill, rather than in God, his attitude is sinful and is condemned by the Lord: "And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:23-24).
 - 3) It is not the amount of money the individual has that constitutes sinful trust, but the trust in the money without regard to how much is there. One could violate the principle of Mark 10:24 by trusting in a one-dollar bill as well as in one million one-dollar bills. The sin in money is to be found in the method by which it was obtained or by the attitude of the owner toward it.
 - b. Verse three gives the particulars of their riches; the previous verse referred to them in a general way. Money in their ancient society consisted of gold and silver, precious stones, real estate, stores of food and grain, and garments. Gold, silver, and precious stones can be stolen; stores of food items can be spoiled or eaten by vermin; clothing can be destroyed by moths. Real estate can be confiscated and houses can be destroyed by fire or the elements. Material wealth is not everlasting. Where are the gorgeous clothes of the rich man of Luke 16:19-31? Where is the fabulous wealth of King Solomon?
 - 1) Luke 12:18-21: "And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry. But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."
 - 2) Luke 16:19: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day."
 - 3) Acts 20:33: "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel."
 - c. Verse two shows God's attitude toward material wealth. Man's symbols of wealth are rottenness in God's sight: your riches are corrupted, your gold and silver are cankered—what a rich man holds dear is rotten and spoiled in God's sight. In his sight, a small pebble is worth as much as a billion dollars;
-

in eternity, material wealth will be worth—nothing; no material item will survive the Lord's second coming (2 Peter 3:10-11; cf. 1 Cor. 15:50).

- d. It is better to wear clothing of righteousness than the best suits or the most beautiful gowns.
- 1) Psalms 84:10: "For a day in thy courts *is* better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 2:9-10: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."
 - 3) 1 Peter 3:1-5: "Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands."
- e. "The word thus used to denote the condition of gold and silver improperly held is more properly construed as figurative, inasmuch as gold and silver do not *literally* rust. Not all of the rich would allow their garments to be subjected to moths; not all of them would permit their wealth to rot, or their money to become cankered. Since such material possessions must eventually suffer destruction, it appears likely that James, in this section, figuratively describes the condition eventually to characterize all such, and typical of the end which must inevitably come upon those who hold their wealth improperly as did the rich particularly described in this section. Though silver and gold coins do not literally acquire rust, or deteriorate in this manner, and to the natural eye they may shine with dazzling brilliance, they may, through hoarding, become corroded in the sight of God and thus become a testimony against their possessors in the day of judgment" (Woods, p.260).
- f. The wealth of these wicked rich men would become a witness against them. The means of getting this wealth, the attitude which they held toward their wealth, the way they used their wealth—these would be evidence against them. In a figure, the "rust" of their money would also eat their flesh. As precious metal, long hoarded, may become marred by rust or stolen, so their souls would be tainted and lost in eternity because of their greed and other sinful practices. A miser had a secret hoard of gold and silver coins. His house had a basement, and unbeknownst to the neighbors, his basement also had a sub-basement. On occasion he would enter the sub-basement where he had his money concealed, spending time there letting the coins trickle through his fingers. On one such occasion, the door of his secret chamber was blown shut, trapping the miser in his secret place until he died. Years later, when a construction crew was demolishing his house, they discovered the miser's bones, draped over his gold and silver. His gold and silver, where his bones rested, revealed his covetousness.
- g. These to whom James addressed his remarks had laid up certain treasures for **the last days**. Perhaps the time reference is to their old age. It is not likely a reference to the time immediately before the second coming of Christ; these people were not Christians, had no knowledge and faith in his return, and were unconcerned over his gospel. They made plans for their future, but like the rich farmer of Luke 12:15-21, left God out of their plans. It is both right and necessary for us to make preparations for old age, but there is more to our future than our financial requirements. With God promising us to provide for our necessities if we seek him and his righteousness first (Matt. 6:33), the very best way to prepare for our golden years is to serve God faithfully.
- 1) "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where

thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).

- 2) Psalms 37:25: "I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."
- h. But many today are like these rich people of James 5; they are laying up treasure, but it is the kind that is temporary in nature, and it will result in their shame: "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. 2:5). The rich Jews lost all their possessions and wealth when the Romans conquered Jerusalem. All the wealth in the world cannot forstall death. No one can carry any of their material wealth into eternity.
- 1) Galatians 6:5-8: "For every man shall bear his own burden. Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 6:5-19: "Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and *before* Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall show, *who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."
3. Verse 4: "Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth."
- a. The rich men owned fields and employed farm-workers. James accuses these wealthy landowners of having cheated their laborers by defrauding them of their wages. This might have been done by various devices, such as claiming the worker did not work diligently, or that he broke some tool, or spilled some grain.
 - b. The Mosaic Law required the employer to pay the wages of the laborers daily; their pay was not to be kept back even for one night: "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob *him*: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning" (Lev. 19:13). The prophets rebuked those who defrauded their workers.
 - 1) Jeremiah 22:13: "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; *that* useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work."
-

- 2) Malachi 3:5: "And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in *his* wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger *from his right*, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts."
- c. Both management and labor (employer and employee) have rights. All too often employers have taken unfair and wrongful advantage of their workers; all too often, employees have taken unfair and wrongful advantage of their employers. A faithful Christian employer will treat his workers right; and a faithful Christian employee will do the very best work possible to earn the wages for which he has agreed to work. The solution to all management-labor strife is the gospel; the solution to all strife between individuals and nations is the gospel; the Arab-Israeli strife, which has, in modern times, raged for more than a half-century, could be fully and finally settled quickly if both parties would accept the principles of the gospel.
- 1) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - 2) Colossians 3:22-25: "Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."
 - 3) Colossians 4:1: "Masters, give unto *your* servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."
 - 4) Ephesians 6:5-9: "Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."
 - 5) 1 Peter 2:18-20: "Servants, *be* subject to *your* masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this *is* thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God."
- d. James depicts the cries of the defrauded workers as having arisen to the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Nothing that occurs on earth is missed by the ears of the Lord. Even the thoughts of our hearts are known by the Almighty. [*Sabaoth* means "hosts" (armies)].
- 1) Psalms 11:4: "The LORD *is* in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne *is* in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men."
 - 2) Psalms 90:8: "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret *sins* in the light of thy countenance."
 - 3) Psalms 139:7-10: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*. If I take the wings of the morning, *and* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."
 - 4) Proverbs 15:3: "The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good."
-

- 5) Jeremiah 23:24: "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD."
 - 6) Hebrews 4:13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
- e. The wicked rich men who defrauded their workers would be known to the Lord. The obvious and strong implication is that the Lord would take actions against them.
- 1) Genesis 4:10: "And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." Cain could not hide his guilt of murdering his brother; God knew and would take action against this wicked man. Abel's blood cried out from the ground for justice.
 - 2) Genesis 19:13: "For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it." The angels dispatched to bring Lot and his family from Sodom announced their intention of destroying this wicked place; the voice of the sinful inhabitants had arisen to the Lord.
 - 3) 1 Peter 3:12: "For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil." The Lord is fully appraised of the righteousness of the righteous and the wickedness of the wicked, and will act accordingly.
 - 4) Revelation 6:9-11: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled." These saints cried out to the Lord for justice and vindication.
- f. The word "sabaoth" means "hosts" [armies]. The "Lord of hosts" is a common expression used in the Old Testament to refer to God.
- 1) "Though the rich will not listen to the entreaties of the poor whom they are defrauding, *God will*; and he duly records the transaction from which judgment will be rendered in the last day. It will be observed that in this solemn scene, there is a preview of the judgment day. The court is convened, the judge is on the throne, the wages of the oppressed, held back by greedy and fraudulent employers, are present to testify, having already spoken loudly their depositions into the ears of the Great Jehovah.... Those who have no one *on earth* to secure their rights, have one in heaven; he is the Lord of hosts, and is thus amply able to defend them and to guarantee to them justice in the end" Woods, p.265).
 - 2) The word *sabaoth* occurs only one other time in the New Testament, in Romans 9:29: "And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrhah."
 - 3) God is all powerful [omnipotent]—he is able to do anything he chooses to do and which is consistent with his holy nature; he is omnipresent—he is not limited by time, distance, or space; God is omniscient—he can know anything he chooses to know. Therefore, he knows the guilt of the wicked, and he is able to apply the appropriate punishment upon them; he knows the righteous conduct of the righteous, and he is able to bring upon them the proper reward: "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Heb. 6:9-10).
4. Verse 5: "Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter."

- a. These wicked rich men who had defrauded their workers are described as **living in pleasure on the earth**. The ASV renders this thought as, “Ye have lived **delicately on the earth**.” Their lives are thus described as being characterized by indolence and indulgence, geared to the gratification of fleshly desires and worldly pleasure. “The word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The life described is one of luxury and extravagance, and made possible, in large measure, by depriving toilers in the field of their just wages” (Woods, p.266). The two following reports illustrate the folly of “delicate living” which excludes God. While the men of these two stories are not charged with the spiritual crimes which the rich men of James’ account describes, they nevertheless were wicked—they had not been obedient to God.
- 1) Luke 12:13-21: "And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry. But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."
 - 2) Luke 16:19-31: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."
- b. A case more in keeping with the one James describes is found in Amos 6:1-6: "Woe to them *that are* at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, *which are* named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came! Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to Hamath the great: then go down to Gath of the Philistines: *be they* better than these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border? Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; That chant to the sound of the viol, *and* invent to themselves instruments of music, like David; That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph."
- c. “A life of ease enervates the mind and body, renders the individual thus influenced unable to exercise himself in useful pursuits, makes honest toil highly disagreeable, and induces a state of mind that

prompts one to use all of his faculties in worthless pursuits, rather than in gainful employment. Jesus warned of this disposition when he said to his disciples, ‘But take heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you suddenly as a snare: for so shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of the earth.’ (Luke 21:34,35.)” (Woods, p.267).

- d. The clause, “ye have nourished hearts, as in a day of slaughter,” is a figure of animals who are being fattened up for slaughter. We feed such an animal all it can eat, but we do not do so for the benefit of the animal—but for ourselves. The animal is eating to its heart’s content, never realizing his fate. A pig can be led to the slaughter site by following a few grains of corn, without ever looking up to see where he is headed. These people James is describing are depicted by this figure. They were living in sinful pleasure, following a wanton way of life, oblivious to their ultimate fate. How many in our modern world are doing the same thing!
5. Verse 6: “Ye have condemned *and* killed the just; *and* he doth not resist you.”
 - a. “The first verb is from *katadike*, condemnation; and denotes the fact that the rich were able to influence even the course of the land and to secure sentences in keeping with their wishes. To the grievous sins of fraud and oppression, the rich, who were the objects of James’ severe denunciations, added the crime of subornation, they controlled the courts and influenced the decisions of the judges. The verb *katedikasate* has the implication of a trial, legally arranged to determine the innocence or guilt of an accused; but, the accused had already been adjudged guilty by those who arraigned him and the trial was, therefore, a mockery of justice” (Woods, p.269).
 - b. The identity of the “righteous one” (the just one) is debated. Some think that any righteous person who has been so-treated is meant; others see the reference to mean Christ. Although the former could be meant, the latter certainly fits the particulars, and the phrase is elsewhere used of Christ.
 - 1) Acts 3:14: "But ye denied the Holy One and **the Just**, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you."
 - 2) Acts 7:52: "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of **the Just One**; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers."
 - 3) Acts 22:14: "And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that **Just One**, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth."
 - 4) 1 John 2:1: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, **Jesus Christ the righteous**."
 - c. The translators of the King James did not capitalize the term, showing that they thought the reference was not to Christ; the American Standard translators did capitalize it. In view of the other passages in which the phrase is used, it seems very likely that James is speaking of Christ. The majority of the Jewish nation rejected the Messiah, although they gave him a warm welcome to Jerusalem, as he made his triumphant entry (Matt. 21:1-11). Later in the same week, after the chief priests had done their evil work, the multitude was persuaded to demand that Barabbas be released and Jesus crucified (Mark 15:9-14). It is possible that these rich men had been present at the trial of the Lord, and were personally involved in demanding his death. But whether they were present or not, they were of the same disposition as the majority of the Jews.
 - 1) Matthew 23:29-36: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. *Ye* serpents, *ye* generation of vipers, how

can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and *some* of them ye shall kill and crucify; and *some* of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute *them* from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation."

- 2) Matthew 23:37-38: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."
 - 3) Mark 15:9-14: "But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy. But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify him. Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him."
 - 4) Acts 7:51-54: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*. When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth."
 - 5) Acts 13:44-47: "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."
- d. Only a remnant of the Jews would obey the gospel; the great majority would reject the gospel.
- 1) John 1:11-12: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name."
 - 2) Romans 9:27: "Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved."
 - 3) Romans 11:5: "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."
- e. **He doth not resist you.** The "he" of this clause has "the just" [one] as its antecedent. Each is singular in number. In the case of Jesus, he did not resist the efforts of his enemies to arrest, try and crucify him. In a broad sense, a righteous person could be arrested and slain for his faith, and offer no resistance (Matt. 5:38-45). But this is specifically stated in our Lord's case.
- 1) Acts 8:32-33: "The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth."
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:21-25: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving

us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

- f. With this information in hand, it appears that James is talking about our Lord's experiences. But there should be no strife over this interpretation, for our eternal salvation does not depend on a perfect understanding of this particular passage. Our commitment to him should be of such nature as to be willing to imitate his example when faced with a hate-filled, implacable enemy:
- 1) "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:38-45).
 - 2) Matthew 27:39-44: "And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth."
 - 3) Luke 23:34: "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots."

B. James 5:7-11: Patiently Await the Lord's Return

1. Verses 7-8: "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. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."
 - a. This section grows out of the preceding information. In view of the possibility of oppression by the wicked of this world, James admonishes the brethren to be patient in enduring their persecution. Those who oppose the righteous will eventually face their misdeeds; and the saints who patiently endure, and will not give up their faith, will be richly rewarded by the Lord, according to his schedule.
 - b. "It is noteworthy that the word translated 'patient' here (*makrothumeo*) is not the same as that thus rendered in the first chapter of the epistle. (James 1:3ff.) There, it is the word *hupomone*, to bear up under. The first of these words (*makrothumeo*) is used to denote patience with *persons*, the second (*hupomoneo*) with *things*. In James 1, the writer bids his readers to endure the trials of life knowing that the exercise of patience produces strength of character. In James 5, the suffering saints are to exhibit longsuffering toward their tormentors, knowing that God will certainly avenge them and see to it that full justice is done" (Woods, pp.272f).
 - c. The apostle Paul gave a similar piece of instruction to the Thessalonians: "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity
-

of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: *Which is* a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (2 Thess. 1:3-10).

- d. James admonishes his readers patiently to await vindication; in the short-run, their oppressors would seem to win, but in the long-run, only the faithful saint would be victorious. There was a danger that they might be overwhelmed by the apparent victory their enemies were gaining and by the evident loss on their own part. In light of this problem, they are counseled to be patient—they would gain the ultimate victory! He illustrates his point by referring to the farmer, who plants the seed in the earth, and patiently awaits the early and latter rain, which would eventually bring the crop to fruition. The harvest is had at the end of the growing season, not at the point the crop is planted. The farmer has, through the ages, been somewhat at the mercy of the elements; but he knows that there is a time when the rain will fall and a time when the sun will shine; both are needed for the crop to come to harvest. The farmer has learned he must be patient through the whole course; and the Christian must learn to be patient, until the time when God will bring about his perfect justice.
- e. "The early and latter rains are often mentioned in the Old Testament. (Deut. 11:14; Jer. 5:24; Hos. 6:3; Joel 2:23.) The *early rain* was that which came about October, soon after or about the time of the fall sowing, and which provided the necessary moisture for the grain to germinate; the *latter rain* fell about March, and which caused the grain to fill out and ripen" (Woods, p.276).
 - 1) Deuteronomy 11:14: "That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil."
 - 2) Jeremiah 5:4: "Therefore I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the LORD, nor the judgment of their God."
 - 3) Hosea 6:3: "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."
 - 4) Joel 2:23: "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month."
- f. What is the **coming of the Lord** of this passage? The coming is mentioned in both verse seven and verse eight. There is no reason to think of them as two different *comings*. If the coming is the Second, then there is a difficulty in understanding James' plain statement the "coming of the Lord draweth nigh." If this is the Second Coming, then how could it be *nigh* when it was at least two thousand years in the future? Brother Woods explains it as being *nigh* only in a relative sense—from God's view point it was near, although from human perspective, it would not be soon. But consider this:
 - 1) Matthew 24:30: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." This coming of the Son of man is said to be in (*on*, ASV) the clouds of heaven. Can this be properly construed figuratively? The same terminology is used in Isaiah 19:1 in the prophetic picture of Egypt's punishment: "The burden of Egypt. Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his

presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it." The Lord said he would come on a cloud against Egypt, but no one understands that coming as literal. Given the context in which the present statement was made, no one should understand the coming of Christ in this instance as a literal coming.

- 2) In fact, there are only two literal comings of Christ (at his birth and at the end of time). But there are other representative, figurative comings.
 - a) He came in a representative manner when he established his church (Matt. 16:28; cf. Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27). He did not come literally on that great occasion but the power by which he set up his kingdom was present, working with his handpicked apostles (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:5,8; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-14; Acts 2:1ff; 2:23, 33). He built his church (Matt. 16:18), but he was not literally present when he caused it to be built.
 - b) He promised to come in judgment against the saints at Ephesus unless they returned to their first love (Rev. 2:5), against the saints at Pergamos if they did not repent (Rev. 2:16), and into the lives of the penitent saints at Laodicea (Rev. 3:20). These were representative comings, and were not literal. He came into their experiences only in the judgments against, or in bringing blessings for, the people involved.
 - c) The context of the verse under consideration (Matt. 24:30) indicates that the coming on the clouds of heaven is another non-literal, symbolic, figurative coming. When the great destruction, suffering and loss of life are considered, the Lord's great power was brought to bear in the overthrow of Jerusalem. Indeed, the Roman general admitted that only with the assistance of God could the great walls of Jerusalem have been breached. Zechariah 14 speaks of this coming. Caiaphas would see the Lord's coming (Matt. 26:64)—evidently at the fall of Jerusalem.
- g. James 4:8 cannot refer to the Second Coming of Christ for the the expression, *the coming of the Lord draweth nigh*, denotes an event close to its fulfillment at the time the statement was made. The same word is used in other passages, and clearly refers to something close at hand:
 - 1) Matthew 3:2: "And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is **at hand**."
 - 2) Matthew 4:17: "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is **at hand**." "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is **at hand**" (Matt. 10:7).
 - 3) Matthew 26:45-46: "Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: behold, the hour is **at hand**, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me."
 - 4) Mark 1:15: "And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is **at hand**: repent ye, and believe the gospel."
 - 5) Mark 14:42: "Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is **at hand**."
 - 6) Romans 13:12: "The night is far spent, the day is **at hand**: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."
 - 7) Philippians 2:30: "Because for the work of Christ he was **nigh** unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me."
 - 8) 1 Peter 4:7: "But the end of all things is **at hand**: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."
 - 9) See also:
 - a) Philippians 4:5: "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."
 - b) 1 Peter 5:6: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt

you in due time.”

- c) Revelation 1:3: “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.”
 - d) Revelation 22:10: “And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.”
 - e) Matthew 24:32: “Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh.”
- h. In our text, something has to be taken as a figure: either (1) the coming of the Lord or (2) the nearness of his coming. If the Second Coming is meant, then “nigh” must be stretched (spiritualized) to cover at least two thousand years (which is contrary to the use of the word in the New Testament). Or, we must understand the “coming of the Lord” to be a representative (figurative) coming.
- 1) Matthew 24:30 uses the coming of the Lord in a representative (figurative) coming; he was present in a representative sense when the Romans attacked and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple; he had predicted these events in detail; his word was being fulfilled in those great tragedies—he was there in a non-literal sense.
 - 2) To this writer, it seems the better understanding of James 5:7-8 is to perceive that James refers to the Lord’s coming in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The greatest opponents the Lord’s people had during the first forty years of the church’s existence were the Jews. But with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the dispersion of the surviving Jews, this persecution came to an end.
 - 3) Hence, James’ point in the passage (5:7-8) called on them to endure just a little longer and a respite would be given them. They were, therefore, to stablish [strengthen; make stable] their hearts.
 - 4) They were to “make the purposes of the heart firm and sure and unwavering in the face of the trials then besetting them. The strength by which this was to be accomplished was the assurance that their cause was just, the Lord was coming, and would vindicate them fully, and punish their oppressors. Because it is not easy to live the Christian life, all of us need the admonition given. The verb means literally to prop, brace, from *sterix*, a support; we are, therefore, to prop up our hearts by faith, and not let them sag into weary moodiness, weakening uncertainty, and eventual unbelief” (Woods, pp.276f).
- i. If the coming referred to in the text is the Second Coming of Christ, then Brother Woods’ statement describes the meaning:
- 1) “The return of Christ is so real, so certain, so sure of fulfillment, that he is always regarded as near, at hand. This is as true for us today, as it was of those of the apostolic age, in view of the fact that he *may* come at any moment. It is, however, quite certain that James did not mean that there was evidence that the Lord would appear in the lifetime of those living, inasmuch as Jesus himself taught that no one knows the time of his return except the Father only: ‘But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only. And as *were* the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; *so shall be the coming of the Son of man.*’ (Matt. 24:36-39.)
 - 2) “It is incorrect to speak of ‘the delay’ of the return of Christ. The word ‘delay,’ means: ‘to put off to a future time; postpone.’ It implies interference of something that causes a detainment or postponement....Thus, to speak of ‘the delay’ of the return of Christ is to imply that the event is off schedule, postponed, not in keeping with the original arrangement. But, inasmuch as we are
-

without any information whatsoever regarding any ‘original arrangement,’ how do we know that the Lord has delayed his coming? We may be sure that it is on schedule, and in exact harmony with his purpose and plan” (Woods, pp.277f).

- j. “It is not correct to say that the apostles believed they would be living when the Lord returned; they knew no more of the *time* of his return than do we. *Because they did not know when he would come, they instructed people to live as if he would come at any moment....*
 - 1) “Peter in his second Epistle indicates that he would die before the event: ‘Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the truth which is with *you*. And I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly, even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me. Yea, I will give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my decease to call these things to remembrance.’ (2 Pet. 1:12-15.)
 - 2) “It should be particularly noted that Peter, in the foregoing statement, penned shortly before his death, desired and expected the brethren to call to remembrance what he had written after his ‘decease.’ thus indicating that they would outlive him, that they would need the instruction he was giving them; and hence time would not terminate with his passing.
 - 3) “That the early disciples *hoped* for the coming of the Lord, *prayed* for it, and lived daily *in expectation of it*, we do not doubt (2 Pet. 3:9ff); such should and must be characteristic of the saints today if we are to please God; but this is far from saying that from any intimation of the Lord or statement of the Holy Spirit a conclusion may be properly drawn that he would come at any *specific time*” (Woods, p.274).
2. Verse 9: “Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.” “Murmur not, brethren, one against another, that ye be not judged: behold, the judge standeth before the doors” (ASV).
 - a. The appearance of Christ lies in the background of this instruction. Because of this (figurative) coming of Christ in the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21), they were told not to murmur and complain against each other. The action of the verb [grudge; murmur] is present active imperative; the command is against doing this as an ongoing practice. Perhaps we all will murmur on occasion; none of us should ever do this on a regular basis; when we realize we have been guilty, we ought to repent and endeavor to do better. In verse 7, James speaks of the coming of Lord; in verse 8, he spoke of the Lord’s nearness (this coming was near to occurring); and in verse 9, he states that the judge is before the door. The three statements all point to the same event: the coming of Christ. As already discussed, that coming more easily fits the figurative coming of the Lord in the overthrow of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
 - b. “The verb denotes fretfulness, impatience with others; the disposition to blame others for one’s distresses. The saints to whom these words were addressed were sorely burdened, their lives were exceedingly hard; and it was, therefore, not always easy for them to bear up under their difficulties with patience and resignation. Often, they were fretful, morose, quarrelsome, disposed to blame their brethren, easy to take offense, and quick to find fault with others, all of which made their own lives miserable, and created serious problems for others” (Woods, p.279). The verb is translated in the KJV as “grudge” and as “murmur” in the ASV.
 - c. We know James (and other inspired writers) did not teach the Second Coming was to be soon (then for two thousand years have passed and the Lord has not come (Heb. 9:28). If James refers here to the Second Coming (thus thinking it was near to happening at this time), he was wrong, for Christ did not and has not come; this would reflect unfavorably on his inspiration. But these references do not

mean the Second Coming was imminent.

- 1) Christ did come figuratively, soon after James wrote, when he arranged for Rome to destroy Jerusalem.
 - 2) Peter knew that the Lord would not come during his lifetime: "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance" (2 Pet. 1:12-15).
 - 3) Paul stated positively that the Lord would not return until some time after the Great Apostasy took place: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:1-4).
- d. The warning of verse 9 is to caution the brethren against murmuring, lest they be condemned as a result of this violation. This shows the doctrine of "the impossibility of apostasy" (once in grace-always in grace) is false. "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" (Jas. 5:19-20). A Baptist preacher once told this writer that his folks were hesitant about studying James because it was hard to reconcile his writings with Baptist doctrine! Impossibility of apostasy and salvation by faith alone are refuted by James' inspired epistle. The Bible anticipated and refuted human error even before those human errors were invented.
- e. To murmur means to pass harsh judgment against another. James warns against this kind of activity, declaring that those who did so, would be judged and condemned, also. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matt. 7:1-6).
- f. The Judge who was standing before the door is Christ. "The figure, 'before the door,' represents Christ as (a) near; (b) in position to enter suddenly and unexpectedly; and (c) ready to accomplish his purpose without delay. It was therefore vitally important that those to whom James wrote should cease their murmuring and complaining lest the Lord should open the door without advance notice and discover that instead of waiting patiently and faithfully for him they were fretful, dissatisfied and morose, and engaged in quarrels among themselves. The author had assured his readers that they would be blessed for their patience and longsuffering; and here he points out that if murmuring and dissatisfaction have been substituted therefor, they must suffer judgment themselves. God will not fail to avenge his faithful; but he will judge them if they fall short of his will" (Woods, pp.280f).
- 1) Luke 12:45-48: "But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that
-

- servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."
- 2) Romans 12:19: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."
 - 3) 1 Peter 4:19: "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."
3. Verse 10: "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience."
- a. The examples of the prophets of the Old Testament era are used as proper examples of how to endure affliction. As those of ancient times patiently endured the afflictions forced upon them, so the brethren to whom James wrote are to imitate their example. Faithful prophets were often mistreated by the people they sought to help.
 - 1) Matthew 5:12: "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."
 - 2) Matthew 23:34,37: "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and *some* of them ye shall kill and crucify; and *some* of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute *them* from city to city....O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!"
 - 3) Acts 7:52: "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers."
 - 4) Hebrews 11:32-38: "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and *of* Barak, and *of* Samson, and *of* Jephthae; *of* David also, and Samuel, and *of* the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth."
 - b. Our brethren in the first century underwent cruel persecution, of every kind, even death. Why? They preached and lived by an unpopular truth—God's inspired word. In modern America, Christians have been opposed, slandered, and hated, but we seldom have been subjected to overt persecution. Our brethren in foreign lands have suffered severe persecution, and some of them have even been slain for their faith. The world scarcely notices, and we cannot expect to see reports of it on the evening news or in the newspapers.
 - c. With the recent terrorists attacks in New York and Washington, it may not be long before some Moslem terrorist will look to us with his hate-filled eye. Moslem religious leaders, in collusion with their governments, have made it well-nigh impossible to take the gospel into their countries. They consider their religion the only one authorized of God, and are dedicated enemies of the gospel of Christ. Their religion could not get a strangle-hold on people until Mohammed hired a mercenary
-

army and forced surrounding tribes to accept the system he had developed. The choice they gave the people was simple: accept Islam or die. Wealthy Jews were given a third choice: accept Islam, **pay a heavy fine**, or die.

- d. The faithful prophets and people of ancient days were sorely persecuted on account of their loyalty to God; since they could not avoid the hatred and persecution God's enemies directed toward them, we may be sure that similar rejection and hatred—and even persecution—will be put upon us.
 - 1) 1 Peter 4:12-16: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 3:12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
 - e. The prophets referred to in the verse **spoke in the name of the Lord**. "Theirs was thus a divine mission; and the message which they delivered to the people was authenticated by the Lord and inspired by the Spirit. Here is additional evidence of the validity and truth of the writings of the prophets of the Old Testament. The word 'prophet,' from *pro* and *phemi* means to speak for, or on behalf of, another; thus those of this classification in both the Old and the New Testament were mouthpieces for God, the instruments by which he delivered his message to the people. Often, the message was highly unpalatable to the wicked and rebellious people; and they showed their resentment by evilly treating the messengers. To reject the message was not only to reject the messenger, but also him who originated the message—*God himself*. It will be recalled that when Samuel, in somewhat petulant fashion, informed God that he had been rejected by the people of Israel, when they demanded a king, God said to him, 'Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, they have rejected me that I should not be king over them.' (1 Sam. 8:4-9.)" (Woods, p.282).
 - f. We have no inspired men on the earth today, but we do have the inspired revelation of the Bible. When we teach people the word of God, and they reject it, they have not merely rejected us—they have really rejected God!
 - 1) Mark 8:38: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."
 - 2) Luke 10:16: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."
4. Verse 11: "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."
 - a. Mature Christians are able to appreciate the blessed state attained by those who patiently endure the hardships and persecutions brought upon them by their enemies. There are many hardships and difficulties which Christians share with the ungodly, problems which are the common lot of all who dwell on the earth. Diseases and droughts, famines and fire, war and weariness, and toothaches and thorns afflict us all; and we all face the ultimate end of earthly life—death. But the troubles James addresses are those brought upon the people of God by their enemies on account of the faithfulness of these saints. Properly we perceive that those who remain faithful to God, even though they are persecuted for righteousness' sake, have attained a state of blessedness.
 - b. "Blessed,' is from *makarizomen*, present active indicative of *makarizo*, from *makarios*—'happy.'
-

However, the word 'happy,' does not adequately convey the meaning of the term used here. Happiness, from *hap*, chance, denotes that which is accidental and which depends on outward circumstances; here, the blessedness which the word indicates is inward, and results from the peace which reigns in the hearts of those who faithfully serve the Lord. The form of the word occurring here appears in Luke 1:48, its only other instance in the New Testament, although the word *makarios* (the word for the Beatitudes, Matt. 5:3-11), occurs often. The faithful have, through the ages, often suffered great harrassment, endured much hardship and suffered agonizing pain" (Woods, p.283).

- c. Philippians 4:6-8: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things."
 - d. Hardships, persecutions, poverty, and martyrdom are often forced upon the faithful. They obtain a partial reward in obtaining greater faith, trust, contentedness, and hope as they endure their afflictions; these spiritual qualities and attainments are blessings in themselves. But the greatest reward awaits the faithful in eternity.
 - 1) Psalms 73:1-19: "Truly God *is* good to Israel, *even* to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, *when* I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For *there are* no bands in their death: but their strength *is* firm. They *are* not in trouble *as other* men; neither are they plagued like *other* men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them *as* a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly *concerning* oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full *cup* are wrung out to them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? Behold, these *are* the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase *in* riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart *in* vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend *against* the generation of thy children. When I thought to know this, it *was* too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *then* understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they *brought* into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors."
 - 2) Mark 10:29-30: "And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 4:6-8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
 - 4) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9: "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
-

- e. Everyone who is familiar with the Old Testament will know the story of Job. His experiences are so widely known that his patience has become a proverb—"The patience of Job." He has become the world's best example of patient endurance in the face of many immense losses and affliction. Job came to see that the agonizing trials he encountered could greatly enhance his spiritual stature: "But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). As the refiner's furnace burns away the impurities and leaves behind the pure gold, so the fiery trials of Job's hardships would burn away his spiritual imperfections. He lived up to the demands of the time, and his story has been preserved for the benefit of all succeeding generations.
- 1) Job 1:21-22: "And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."
 - 2) Job 2:9-10: "Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips."
 - 3) Job 16:19: "Also now, behold, my witness *is* in heaven, and my record *is* on high."
 - 4) Job 19:27: "Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me."
 - 5) If one should doubt the harshness of Job's trials, let him read the book of Job, and see the tragic loss of his livestock, his children, and his health; add to this the lack of support from his wife; and then his friends tried to find fault with him.
 - 6) "The book of Job demonstrates the fact that a faithful man will bear any form of trial rather than forsake God. It exhibits in clear and striking fashion the struggles of one who, while he cannot understand, at the moment, the occasion for his sore trials, *does not blame God with them*, and maintains his faith in deity. Job and his experiences provides us with an object lesson in unwavering faith in the face of tremendous trial. Despite his physical afflictions, the loss of his earthly possessions, the scorn and false accusations of his friends, and the faithlessness of his wife, 'Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.' (Job 1:22)" (Woods, pp.286f).
- f. Job could not see the outcome of his trials while he was in the midst of his suffering. From our viewpoint, having the full story of his experiences before us, we know the outcome—that his troubles soon passed and he was well-blessed at the proper time. We, therefore, are able to see the **end** [the aim, the purpose, the design] God had in Job's afflictions. Through his many trials, Joseph could not see the ultimate purposes Jehovah had in store for him, but when all the whole story was revealed, he could then see what God's purposes had been in the ordeals through which he had been led. Both Job and Joseph learned that God's purposes were for their good, not for their hurt. So it is with all chastening directed toward his people.
- 1) Genesis 45:1-11: "Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I *am* Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I *am* Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years *hath* the famine *been* in the land: and yet *there are* five years, in the which *there shall* neither *be* earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now *it was* not you *that* sent me hither, but God: and he hath made

me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not: And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: And there will I nourish thee; for yet *there are* five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty."

- 2) Job 42:10-13: "And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold. So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters."
 - 3) Romans 8:28-38: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth. Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are 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 powers, nor things present, nor things to come."
 - 4) Hebrews 12:6-11: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."
- g. When God completes his purposes in the lives of men and women who serve him, though their lives might have hardships and troubles, yet his aim is to show great mercy and compassion. In the case of some, that result is experienced even in this life; in all cases, the glory and grandeur of heaven is bestowed upon the faithful. God is full of pity [compassionate; tender-hearted]; he is full of mercy. It is hard for us to perceive the purpose God may have for us to fulfill; the difficulties and hardships we must endure in the short-run may becloud his ultimate aim. It is exceedingly important that we come to know God's word, to obtain as much wisdom as possible, and to trust God to do what is right. If our lives are ordered by his word, the outcome is predictable, despite the short-term problems—we will be blessed, especially in eternity, with far more that we could ever dream! We must love him, trust him, serve him—and all will be well!
-

C. James 5:12: Swearing Forbidden.

1. "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and *your* nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation."
2. The Sermon on the Mount carries a very similar statement: "Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matt. 5:33-37).
 - a. To swear is to invoke the name of Deity or other sacred persons or things; to utter an oath. An oath: "a solemn appeal to God, or to a sacred or revered person or sanction (as the Bible, the temple, the altar) by way of attesting the truth of one's word, the inviolability of a promise, etc.; also the affirmation or promise supported by the oath, or its form of expression" (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary).
 - 1) There are two elements involved in an oath: (1) an affirmation or promise, and (2) an appeal to God who knows all things, and punishes those who lie. The basis on which an oath is regarded as binding on the conscience is seen in Hebrews 6:16, as an appeal to God to ratify or confirm the affirmation or promise.
 - 2) To forswear: "to perjure oneself; it means false swearing and a profane use of the name of God; the Hebrew word which answers to 'in vain' may be rendered to include 'forswear thyself'" (Boles, *Commentary on Matthew*, p. 144).
 - b. Oaths were common in the Old Testament era [Woods, *Questions*, p.305]:
 - 1) They involved agreements to perform certain acts:
 - a) Genesis 14:22: "And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth."
 - b) Genesis 24:2: "And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh."
 - c) Genesis 24:8-9: "And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter."
 - 2) Allegiances to a superior:
 - a) Ecclesiastes 8:2: "I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God."
 - b) 1 Kings 18:10: "As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not."
 - 3) Promises of a ruler: "And the men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted any food" (1 Sam. 14:24).
 - 4) Vows made in the form of oaths: "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee" (Deut. 23:21-22).
 - 5) Public and legal vows and oaths.
 - a) Leviticus 6:3: "Or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth

falsely; in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein.”

- b) Deuteronomy 19:6-9: “Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him; whereas he was not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past. Wherefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt separate three cities for thee. And if the LORD thy God enlarge thy coast, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers; If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the LORD thy God, and to walk ever in his ways; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, beside these three.”
- 6) The law referred to in this text is recorded in Leviticus 19:12, Numbers 30:2, and Deuteronomy 23:21 (see Boles, p.144).
 - a) Leviticus 19:12: “And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.”
 - b) Numbers 30:1: “And Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded.”
 - c) Deuteronomy 23:21: “When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.”
 - d) Ecclesiastes 5:2-5: “Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.”
 - e) Zechariah 8:17: “And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD.”
 - 7) Oaths among the Jews took various form (Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 1:23; Hebrews 6:16ff).
 - a) "God do so and more also..." (1 Sam. 14:44).
 - b) "As the Lord liveth..." (1 Sam. 14:39).
 - c) "The Lord be between thee and me for ever" (1 Sam. 20:23).
 - d) "The God of Abraham...judge betwixt us" (Gen. 31:53).
 - e) “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 9:1).
 - f) “Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth” (2 Cor. 1:23).
 - g) Hebrews 6:16-18: “For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”
 - c. The Jews regarded the third commandment (Ex. 20:7; Deut. 5:11) as forbidding "any profane or flagrant use of the names of God, but they often resorted to technicalities and illogical reasoning to justify oaths where there was no specific mention of the name of Deity.
 - 1) “Some rabbis held, for example, that one was bound to tell the truth only when the names of God

were mentioned, on the ground that God became a party to the agreement when thus involved, but that if his name were not included in the oath any promise made one did not have to keep! Thus, by mental reservation, by trickery and by the use of evasive methods, many in the first century in the Jewish religion callously broke their promises and violated their oaths.

- 2) "Others avoided the use of God's name in their oaths by swearing by the handiwork of God, the heavens, the earth, the sun, the moon and the stars. (This), of course, did not excuse their lapses because all of these objects are the works of God; and, to swear by them is to invoke God. For this reason, the inspired writer said, 'swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth....'
 - 3) "Thus, all oaths, of this nature, are forbidden. God has always regarded with the greatest displeasure any use of his name which is flippant, frivolous and profane" (Woods, *Questions*, p.306).
- d. Concerning "profane," Woods offers the following observations: "It is of serious consequences that many members of the church today have allowed to creep into their conversations words and phrases which are definitely and unmistakably profane. Others who would not dare use the holy names, God, Christ, Jesus, or Jerusalem, Heaven, Hell, Hades, as interjections (an ejaculatory word or form of speech, usually thrown in without grammatical connection, Webster) or to emphasize truth of what they are saying, will, nevertheless, use euphemisms (substitute word or phrases less objectionable) whose derivation goes back to one of the foregoing forms....A look into the etymology of these terms will show that they are directly traceable to sacred names and things, and that their use is profane" (ibid., p.306).
- e. According to the foregoing writer, we are not to conclude "that it is wrong to use the names of God in our conversations when such usage is reverent, respectful and sober. [See Rom. 6:2, Acts 18:21, and 2 Tim. 1:18 where proper uses are found—bw]. It is the profane use of such names which is prohibited. Nor, are judicial, legal oaths, statements before notaries public, and the like common to the business world, forbidden. But, did not James include, among the prohibitions, 'any other oath?'It is significant that an oath, in the name of God, is not mentioned; it would seem that if it were the purpose of the sacred writer to forbid all oaths, including judicial ones, this would have been the first mentioned.
- 1) "But as a matter of fact, this type of oath, in contrast with others, was specifically commanded under the law (Deut. 6:13, 10:20). 'Thou shalt fear Jehovah thy God; and him shalt thou serve, and shalt swear by his name.' That it was not the purpose of our Lord or of James to forbid all oaths seems to follow from these considerations: (1) Jesus, before Caiaphas, testified under oath (Matt. 26:63,64). (2) Paul often asserted things in the form of an oath: 'For God is my witness, whom I serve...' (Rom. 1:9; see, also, II Cor. 1:23; Phil. 1:8; Gal. 1:20.) (3) God, when he could swear by no greater, 'Swore by himself.' (Heb. 6:13.) The ancient prophets often invoked the name of God in their solemn affirmations (Isa. 65:16). James said, 'Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay...'
 - 2) "This appears the key to the understanding of this matter. In all circumstances, we are to say 'yes,' when yes is the correct answer, and 'no,' when no is the true one. We are to tell the truth without the necessity of binding ourselves with an oath. The Jews of that day were addicted to the vice of constant and continuous profanity; of calling God to witness the most common and frivolous matters, a practice which prostituted the name of God to the level of the most insignificant things. Men ought to tell the truth for the truth's sake, and not simply because they are under oath so to do.
 - 3) "Additional evidence of the correctness of this conclusion is to be seen in the word which the Holy Spirit used to designate any other oath. Had James intended to assert that any oath, all oaths, every oath, must be refrained from, he would have used for the word 'other' the Greek *heteros*,

which means another of a different kind, instead of *allos* (which he did use), another of the same kind. (Jas. 5:12.) It seems clear, therefore, that the sacred writer intended to include only such oaths as were of the type under consideration and to which the people of that day were specially addicted" (Woods, *Questions*, p.307).

- f. However, to avoid all oaths is eminently safe. To *affirm* instead of *swear* is permitted by our law, and accomplishes the same purpose, and at the same time protects our tender conscience.
- g. Matthew 5:34-37: "But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."
 - 1) "...Jewish teachers held that no oath had any binding force unless it brought in the name of God; swearing by the heavens, or by the earth, or by the stars went for nothing, because the name of God was not expressed. They thought by this practice to honor the name of God, but by it they really dishonored God" (Boles, *Commentary on Matthew* pp.144f).
 - 2) "The only oath authorized by the law of Moses was one taken by the name of God (Deut. 6 :13.) The oaths which Jesus here proceeds to prohibit—'by heaven,' 'by the earth,' 'by Jerusalem,' 'by the head'— were all unauthorized by the law. Moreover, it was taught by the scribes that these oaths, and all others which did not include the name of God, had not the binding force of an oath. The universal prohibition, 'Swear not at all,' is distributed by the specification of these four forms of oaths, and is therefore most strictly interpreted as including only such oaths" (McGarvey, *Commentary on Matthew and Mark*, p.57).
 - 3) Citing Hebrews 6:13, 7:21, Matthew 26:63, 2 Corinthians 1:23, Romans 1:9, Galatians 1:20, Philippians 1:8, 1 Corinthians 15:31, and Revelation 10:5-6, McGarvey observes: "We conclude, then, that judicial oaths, and oaths taken in the name of God on occasions of solemn religious importance, are not included in the prohibition; but as these are the only exceptions found in the Scriptures, we conclude that all other oaths are forbidden. All of these remarks apply with the same force to the parallel passage in James 5:12. For the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees on the subject see Matthew 23:16-22..."(*ibid.* p.57).
 - 4) Swear not by heaven (it is God's throne); nor by earth (God's footstool); nor by Jerusalem (God's Holy City, under the Old Law); nor by the head, which is, "A common oath....The same as to swear by the life; or to say, I will forfeit my life if what I say is not true" (Barnes, *Commentary on Matthew*, p.58).
 - 5) "Man has not the power to make one hair become white or black; God alone can do that...We have no right to swear by ourselves or by any member of our body..." (Boles, p.145).
 - 6) One should never use oaths in common conversation. A Christian does not have to reinforce his word with any oath or other device. We may safely refrain from entering into any sort of swearing. We should be content with a simple affirmation (yea) or simple negation (no). To go beyond this is to do evil. A saint "must live so that whatever he states will be accepted as the truth; his character and life give affirmation to what he says....no oath is needed..." (Boles, *ibid.*, p.146).
- h. James prefaces his comment on the subject with the introductory phrase, "But above all things." He thus emphasized the importance of what he is about to write. Obviously there were dire consequences if the admonition which follows were to be ignored. He urges his readers to refrain from swearing by heaven, by the earth, or by any other oath. "Jehovah has ever regarded, with the greatest displeasure, any disposition on the part of man to use his name in flippant, frivolous and profane fashion. The first commandment of the decalogue was designed to protect the sanctity of God's being; the second forbade man to approach him through some human device; the third—'Thou shalt not take the name

of Jehovah thy God in vain: for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain’—was formulated to guarantee respect and reverence for his name. (Deut. 5:7-11.)

- 1) “One is profane who uses sacred things in an irreverent and blasphemous manner. The word *vain*, in the third commandment of the decalogue, is translated from a word in the Hebrew language which means in a light, flippant and contemptuous fashion. It is of serious consequence that many members of the church today have allowed to creep into their phraseology words and phrases the use of which amounts to profanity.
 - 2) “Others, who would not dare use the holy names, God, Christ, Jesus, Jerusalem, Heaven, Hell, Hades, as interjections...and for emphasis, will, nevertheless, use euphemisms (the substitution of a word or phrase less offensive or objectionable), the derivation of which goes back to one of the foregoing forms. Were those who thus do aware of the origin of many of these common by-words they would be shocked! It is therefore important that we obtain a clear conception of the significance of such words and phrases and avoid all which even indirectly border on the profane. Among them are such words as *Gee Whiz, Gosh, Gad, Egad, Golly, Good Gracious, Good Grief, My Goodness, Jeminy, Zounds, Jove*, etc., etc.” (Woods, p.290).
- i. Matthew Henry offers these comments in regard to swearing:
- 1) “Above all things swear not, for how can you expect the name of God should be a strong tower to you in your distress if you profane it and play with it at other times?’ But (as Mr. Baxter observes) ‘all this is so far from forbidding necessary oaths that it is but to confirm them, by preserving the due reverence of them.’ And then he further notes that ‘The true nature of an oath is, by our speech, to pawn the reputation of some certain or great thing, for the averring of a doubted less thing; and not (as is commonly held) an appeal to God or other judge.’ Hence it was that swearing by the heavens, and by the earth, and by the other oaths the [author] refers to, came to be in use.
 - 2) “The Jews thought if they did but omit the great oath of *Chi-Eloah*, they were safe. But they grew so profane as to swear by the creature, as if it were God; and so advanced it into the place of God; while, on the other hand, those who swear commonly and profanely by the name of God do hereby put him upon the level with every common thing. But let your yea be yea, and your nay nay; lest you fall into condemnation; that is, ‘let it suffice you to affirm or deny a thing as there is occasion, and be sure to stand to your word, and be true to it, so as to give no occasion for your being suspected of falsehood; and then you will be kept from the condemnation of backing what you say or promise by rash oaths, and from profaning the name of God to justify yourselves.
 - 3) “It is being suspected of falsehood that leads men to swearing. Let it be known that you keep to truth, and are firm to your word, and by this means you will find there is no need to swear to what you say. Thus shall you escape the condemnation which is expressly annexed to the third commandment: The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain” (Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.).

D. James 5:13-18: The Power of Prayer.

1. Verse 13: “Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.”
 - a. Ever the practical writer, James admonishes his auditors to pray when they were afflicted [suffered]. Prayer is the first thing a faithful child of God resorts to when some suffering comes upon him. When a little child is hurt, his natural reaction is to carry his injury to his parent; he knows that comfort and help can be found there. When a child of God suffers some affliction, it ought to be natural for him to approach God, his heavenly parent, for comfort and help.
 - 1) Psalms 46: "God *is* our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we

fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; *Though* the waters thereof roar *and* be troubled, *though* the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. *There is* a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy *place* of the tabernacles of the most High. God *is* in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, *and that* right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The LORD of hosts *is* with us; the God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah. Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I *am* God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The LORD of hosts *is* with us; the God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah."

- 2) 2 Corinthians 12:7-10: "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."
 - 3) Hebrews 13:5-6: "*Let your conversation be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."
 - 4) 1 Peter 5:6-7: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."
- b. James counsels those who are merry [cheerful] to sing psalms.
- 1) The cheerfulness meant is not that of a frivolous, worldly nature, but has reference to being in good spirits, free from anxiety. "The verb also occurs in Acts 27:22, 25, where Paul besought his traveling companions to 'be of good cheer'" (Woods, p.297). This cheerful disposition is the very opposite of the disposition of one who is in the midst of affliction. "It is not improbable that the 'suffering' one and, the 'cheerful' one of this passage are the same person. That is, he who is suffering is to pray to the Father to lift his burden; and, when it is gone, to be cheerful, and to express such in praise and worship" (ibid.).
 - 2) The word for "sing" (*psalleteo*) is from *psallo*. This Greek term had a variety of meanings through the ancient centuries, including the action of plucking out the hair, snapping a carpenter's string, twanging the strings of a musical instrument. In the New Testament, it means "to sing." "Its basic meaning, to pluck or twang, is thus metaphorically seen in its New Testament usage, in that the chords of the heart are to be 'twanged' or played upon: 'And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody (*psallo*) in your heart to the Lord.' (Eph. 5:18-19.)
 - a) "There are those who, in an effort to justify the use of mechanical instruments of music in Christian worship today, point to *earlier* meanings of the word, and urge that such significance should be assigned to it today. But those who thus do are unable to follow their own argument to its conclusion.
 - b) "It is conceded by the most avid defender of instrumental music in worship that one may acceptably approach God in public religious devotion without it; that its use is a matter of personal choice; and is, therefore, in the realm of expediency. But, if the instrument inheres in the word and to *psalleteo* is to use a stringed instrument, it follows that one cannot *psalleteo*

without it. The instrument is either in the word, or it is not. If it is in it, one cannot worship God without an instrument of music; if it is not in it, then the argument fails.

- c) "If it be urged that the instrument inheres in the word, the following conclusions irresistibly follow: (1) It is impossible to *psallete* without an instrument of music; (2) since each individual is commanded to *psallete*, each must personally twang the strings of a mechanical instrument in worship to be acceptable; (3) to prepare people to worship acceptably would necessitate assisting them in such use; (4) only stringed instruments might properly be used, inasmuch as these are the only type which may be twanged or plucked. This would eliminate all *wind* instruments such as organs, horns, etc....
 - d) "Dozens of the world's most profound Greek scholars, including all of those which have produced the major English translations, have borne witness to the fact that the New Testament meaning of the word does not include the use of a mechanical instrument; and that its meaning today is simply to sing. An interesting and significant side-light on this is the fact that the Greek Orthodox Churches—whose members are for the most part, *Greek*-speaking people—have never used instrumental music in their worship" (Woods, pp.297f).
- c. The primary purpose of worship is to glorify God. A secondary purpose is for the edification it produces in the worshiper. Another purpose in singing is the teaching and admonishing which singing scriptural songs offers to the people in the assembly. One of the common mistakes people make in worship is to design programs or develop some activities which are pleasing to them, without any consideration to whether such is pleasing to God. The only way we can know what God wants to be offered to him in worship is by consulting his inspired word.
- 1) Mark 7:7-13: "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is* Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free*. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."
 - 2) John 4:23-24: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
- d. There are different kinds of worship identified in the Bible, only one of which is acceptable.
- 1) Vain worship: "But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9).
 - 2) Will worship: "Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh" (Col. 2:23). This worship is offered in accordance with the will of the individual, not by the will of God.
 - 3) Ignorant worship: "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, *Ye* men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you" (Acts 17:22-23).
 - 4) Worship in spirit and in truth: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24). This is
-

the only acceptable worship—it is offered in keeping with God’s truth and emanates from hearts that are sincere.

2. Verse 14-15: “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.”
 - a. James next instructs those who are sick to call for the elders of the church, who would provide some special assistance. Physical illness afflicts both saint and sinner. We share the same earthly situation, and are susceptible to the same diseases, accidents, and trouble. The greatest difference between the case of the saint from that of the sinner is that we have access to the throne of God, who is able to aid us. The fact that a child of God is injured or sick does not mean that the individual has committed some act of sin, and is being punished for his offense [this could be the case, but we are not able to know it is so in some specific instance].
 - 1) Job suffered tremendously, but not because of some offense against the Almighty; rather, his faithfulness was being tested by the devil.
 - 2) Paul suffered much from his “thorn in the flesh” (2 Cor. 12:1ff).
 - 3) Epaphroditus was gravely ill: "Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow" (Phil. 2:25-27).
 - 4) Timothy had chronic health problems: "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (1 Tim. 5:23).
 - 5) Trophimus suffered from some kind of illness: "Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick" (2 Tim. 4:20).
 - b. James directs those who are sick to call for the elders of the church. The reference to the church is to a local body of believers, the congregation where the Christian is a member. The eldership is comprised of two or more men who meet the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. If there is a sufficient number of qualified men to serve, each congregation is to have two or more elders. A plurality is required; the New Testament knows nothing of a one-man pastor system such as is common in the sectarian world today.
 - 1) Acts 14:23: "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."
 - 2) Titus 1:5: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee."
 - c. These elders would pray over the sick person—in his behalf. The statement is not binding some special bodily position as the prayer is offered. To pray over someone is simply to pray for him [her]. The Bible speaks of people lying prostrate on the ground, standing up, kneeling down, etc., as they prayed; therefore, no special bodily position is mandated.
 - d. These elders would anoint the sick person in the name of the Lord. To do something *in the name of the Lord* is to act by the authority of the Lord. One cannot do a thing in the name of the Lord if that act has no New Testament authority behind it.
 - 1) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - 2) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."

- e. In the situation envisioned by James, the sick person was to be anointed with oil. "Olive oil was used both medicinally and symbolically in Biblical times. It was used symbolically in the appointment and coronation of prophets, priests and kings of the Old Testament period implying an anointing of the Holy Spirit. (1 Sam. 10:1, 9.) Our Lord sometimes used outward symbols in connection with his healing. (John 9:6, 11.) Olive oil also has therapeutic value, instances of which may be seen in Luke 10:34, where oil was poured into the wounds of the man who fell among thieves. It appears quite clear here that the use of the oil was *symbolic*, and not medicinal; and thus served as a token of the power of God by which the healing was accomplished. *Elders*, not doctors, were to be sent for. Had the healing art *through means* been intended, the instruction would have been "Call for the doctors and let them diagnose his case and prescribe the proper treatment...." (Woods, p.301).
- f. *The prayer of faith shall save the sick.* This is a prayer that is offered from faith; a prayer that is offered because of the faith of the ones doing the praying.
- 1) "It should be observed that James declares that it is *the prayer of faith* which accomplishes this; not prayer *and oil*; not prayer and medicinal treatment; not prayer and the laying on of hands. The prayer of faith was that prayed by the elders in which, of course, the interested one, who called for the elders, joined" (Woods, p.302).
 - 2) One of the nine spiritual gifts identified in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 is the gift of faith. This was a supernatural gift (verse 9).
 - a) Matthew 17:19-20: "Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 13:2: "And though I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."
 - 3) This miraculous gift would enable the elders, who obviously possessed that special power, to heal the sick person supernaturally—by the power of God; it would be done instantly and completely. The reason the sick person called for the elders was on account of his illness; the "raising up" of this individual would naturally be from his sick-bed—he would be healed. "This prayer is said to *save* (in the original and primary import of the word, to make well) the sick. This word must therefore, in this instance, be regarded as limited in its significance to the physical, temporal healing of the affliction which possessed the man, inasmuch as the additional fact of the forgiveness of his sins, is later affirmed" (ibid.).
- g. *And if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.* In most of our prayers, we include a petition for forgiveness; this is true of our private and public prayers. Nothing would be more natural than that the elders would include such an entreaty in their prayers. Implied in this is the repentance and confession of sin on the part of the ailing person. All the people involved in this operation are Christians, to whom the second law of pardon applies.
- 1) Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
 - 2) James 5:16: "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."
 - 3) 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
- h. "From the foregoing considerations, it must be quite obvious to the discerning student that this passage was applicable to the period of miraculous gifts in the church and limited to it. On the
-

assumption that it is today applicable, if the sick called for the elders as directed here, and the elders did their duty, *no one in the church would ever die!* Yet, the Hebrew writer solemnly affirmed, "It is appointed unto men once to die..." (Heb. 9:27)" (Woods, p.303). [For additional information of this passage, see the excellent article by Wayne Jackson at the end of this chapter]. Miracles were intended to exist for only a limited period of time; when the need for miracles was fulfilled, they ceased to be wrought. The need was over when the full revelation of the New Testament was completed.

- 1) Micah 7:15: "According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous *things*."
 - 2) Mark 16:20: "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 8:8-13: "But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."
 - 4) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
- i. Matthew Henry offers these comments:
- 1) "In the times of miraculous healing, the sick were to be anointed with oil in the name of the Lord. Expositors generally confine this anointing with oil to such as had the power of working miracles; and, when miracles ceased, this institution ceased also. In Mark's gospel we read of the apostles anointing with oil many that were sick, and healing them, Mark 6:13. And we have accounts of this being practiced in the church...but then the gift of healing also accompanied it, and, when the miraculous gift ceased, this rite was laid aside.
 - 2) "The papists indeed have made a sacrament of this, which they call the extreme unction. They use it, not to heal the sick, as it was used by the apostles; but as they generally run counter to scripture, in the appointments of their church, so here they ordain that this should be administered only to such as are at the very point of death.
 - 3) "The apostle's anointing was in order to heal the disease; the popish anointing is for the expulsion of the relics of sin, and to enable the soul (as they pretend) the better to combat with the powers of the air. When they cannot prove, by any visible effects, that Christ owns them in the continuance of this rite, they would however have people to believe that the invisible effects are very wonderful. But it is surely much better to omit this anointing with oil than to turn it quite contrary to the purposes spoken of in scripture" (Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.).
- j. Coffman made these comments on the false doctrine of *extreme unction*:
- 1) "Any interpretation of this passage must take account of the Roman Catholic doctrine of *extreme unction* which is erroneously based upon it. The footnote in the Douay Bible has this: 'St. James promulgated here the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. *Presbyters* is certainly used here in the

sense of *priests*.’

- 2) “James did not promulgate the doctrine mentioned. Indeed, it was never even heard of in the Catholic Church itself until centuries after the NT was written. ‘In the twelfth century, Petrus Lombardus named this as the fifth of the Roman sacraments; and three centuries later the Council of Trent established the Catholic sacrament as we know it today’ [R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistle of James*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing Co., 1938, p.665].
 - 3) “Regarding the notion that ‘presbyters,’ as James used the word here, actually means ‘priests,’ this is a preposterous error. There is not a single instance of any such meaning pertaining to ‘presbyters’ in the whole NT” (Coffman, pp.125f).
- k. Henry further comments on the passage:
- 1) “As Christians we are taught to suit ourselves to the dispensations of Providence (v. 13): Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms. Our condition in this world is various; and our wisdom is to submit to its being so, and to behave as becomes us both in prosperity and under affliction. Sometimes we are in sadness, sometimes in mirth; God has set these, one over against the other, that we may the better observe the several duties he enjoins, and that the impressions made on our passions and affections may be rendered serviceable to our devotions.
 - 2) “Afflictions should put us upon prayer, and prosperity should make us abound in praise. Not that prayer is to be confined to a time of trouble, nor singing to a time of mirth; but these several duties may be performed with special advantage, and to the happiest purposes, at such seasons.
 - 3) “In a day of affliction nothing is more seasonable than prayer. The person afflicted must pray himself, as well as engage the prayers of others for him. Times of affliction should be praying times. To this end God sends afflictions, that we may be engaged to seek him early; and that those who at other times have neglected him may be brought to enquire after him. The spirit is then most humble, the heart is broken and tender; and prayer is most acceptable to God when it comes from a contrite humble spirit. Afflictions naturally draw out complaints; and to whom should we complain but to God in prayer? It is necessary to exercise faith and hope under afflictions; and prayer is the appointed means both for obtaining and increasing these graces in us. Is any afflicted? Let him pray.
 - 4) “In a day of mirth and prosperity singing psalms is very proper and seasonable. In the original it is only said sing, *psallete*, without the addition of psalms or any other word: and we learn from the writings of several in the first ages of Christianity (particularly from a letter of Pliny's, and from some passages in Justin Martyr and Tertullian) that the Christians were accustomed to sing hymns, either taken out of scripture, or of more private composure, in their worship of God....Let our singing be such as to make melody with our hearts unto the Lord, and God will assuredly be well pleased with this kind of devotion” (*ibid.*).
3. Verse 16: “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.” "Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working" (ASV).
 - a. The word “faults” in the KJV is “sins” in the ASV. The healing of the verse is the healing of the soul, *i.e.*, the forgiveness of sins. That is the primary point of the verse. A Christian who has been overtaken by a sin (verse 19) is to be shown his error so as to bring him back to salvation (verse 20). The saving of a soul from death in verse 20, is described in verse 16 as a healing of the soul.
 - b. Christians are instructed to confess their faults (sins) to each other. This verse does not directly
-

address the requirement of confessing our sins to God, but to other Christians. Other passages show that we are to confess to God (1 John 1:8-10). The text does not address the subject of confessing to an elder or preacher, but to one another. The matter is placed on the level of all Christians.

- c. "This passage is often cited by the Catholics to support their doctrine of Auricular Confession (confession in the ear), the practice of regularly confessing to a priest; but the words 'one to another' constitute a fatal addition, insofar as that doctrine is concerned! If this teaches that one is to confess to the priest, it teaches as clearly that the priest must then immediately confess his sin *to the confessee!*" (Woods, p.305).
- d. The nature or situation in which the confession is to be made is not identified. It could be a private or a public confession—depending on the nature of the confession that needs to be made. As a rule of common sense, the confession should be as public or as private as the offense. If only three others know of the sin, only those three need to be aware of the confession. If the sin is known by all in the congregation, the acknowledgment of the sin ought to be made to the whole congregation. But this does not mean that the offending member would have to publicly state his confession in the very presence of the church; if he comes to see his error, and repents in a private situation, with prayer being made in his behalf, then an announcement of his repentance may be made before the church. There is nothing in the text that requires the penitent saint to verbally identify the particulars of his sin; what is required is the confession of sin—with his acknowledgment of wrong-doing and intent to do better. Repentance is not stated in the passage, but is implied (Acts. 8:22; 17:30).
 - 1) The point of importance is that those who have known of the sin should also learn of the repentance. During a telephone conversation with an invalid sister, this member acknowledged that she had been involved in sin, and asked for prayers to be made. Prayer was offered over the phone, and a few minutes later, at the evening worship service, an announcement was made concerning the confession of the penitent lady.
 - 2) As there is no comfort in the passage for the Catholic confessional, there is no comfort to be found there for the "prayer-partner" practice of the late Crossroads Movement. This latter case was one in which a new "convert" was assigned to a seasoned member; the novice was required to confess all the inner workings of his mind to his "superior"—but according to the text, the confession is to be made by each member; the "superior" would have to confess his sins to the novice, which was not done. The procedure was a method of mind-control and manipulation. The prayer-partner practice is as unscriptural as the Catholic confessional.
 - 3) The confession of the text deals with either a public or private situation. If we sin in the presence of another member, or against that other member, confession of wrong is to be made between those two members. If the sin was of a public nature, the confession is to be as public as practicable.
- e. The result of the prayer is healing. Is this the healing of the body, as in verses 14-15? Woods and Barnes thought so. Or is it the healing of the soul (forgiveness)? The immediate context of the healing is the confession of sins; it seems obvious that the healing is spiritual, not physical. The problem being discussed is the guilt of sin; when the guilty one confesses, prayer is to be made in his behalf. Why? So that he may be forgiven! "The word translated *healed* is the Greek word *iaomai* and means 'to heal, cure, revive, to recover.' In Matthew 15:28, and other places it refers to physical healing. In the following passages it is used in reference to spiritual healing, Matthew 13:15; John 12:40; Acts 28:27; Hebrews 12:13; I Peter 2:24. Prayer will **revive** the one who has sinned" (Turner, p.162).
 - 1) Matthew 13:15: "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

- 2) John 12:40: "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their eyes*, nor understand with *their heart*, and be converted, and I should heal them."
 - 3) Acts 28:27: "For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their eyes*, and hear with *their ears*, and understand with *their heart*, and should be converted, and I should heal them."
 - 4) Hebrews 12:13: "And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."
 - 5) 1 Peter 2:24: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."
 - 6) Acts 8:20-24: "But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and *in* the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me."
 - 7) 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - 8) James 5:16: "Confess *your* sins one to another, brethren, and pray one for another, that you might be restored. There is much strength in *the* fervent prayer of a righteous *person*" (English Study Bible).
- f. James next assures his readers that prayer is a powerful and effective tool. This is God's estimation of prayer. God speaks to us through his inspired word, as we read, study and meditate upon it; we speak to God through the avenue of prayer, expressing our gratitude, our petitions, and devotion. The direct implication of the verse affirms he will hear and answer. There are conditions involved before prayers are acceptable.
- g. The prayers of a *righteous* [*just*] man avails much. A righteous man (or woman) is one who does right. One who is righteous is one who is obedient to God's righteous instructions:
- 1) Psalms 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness."
 - 2) Matthew 3:15-17: "And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
 - 3) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - 4) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 5) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
 - 6) 1 John 2:29: "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is
-

born of him."

- 7) 1 John 3:7: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."
 - h. "The prayers of a man who keeps the commandments, 'avail much' (*polu ischuei*, has great force.) Here, too, the verb is in the present tense and means that the prayer of a man who keeps the commandments keeps on having great force. Here is clear and convincing testimony to the effectiveness and efficiency of prayer by good men. Such prayers avail *much*. How much is much? 'Much' is a comparative term; it is however, *more than a little*; and it is therefore safe for us to affirm that prayer avails more than a little in its working when engaged in by a man who keeps the commandments of the Lord. Thus, when one denies the efficacy of prayer the effort is an exhibition of skepticism" (Woods, p.307).
 - i. "But the confession here required is that of Christians to one another, and not, as the papists would have it, to a priest. Where persons have injured one another, acts of injustice must be confessed to those against whom they have been committed. Where persons have tempted one another to sin or have consented in the same evil actions, there they ought mutually to blame themselves and excite each other to repentance. Where crimes are of a public nature, and have done any public mischief, there they ought to be more publicly confessed, so as may best reach to all who are concerned....But then we are not to think that James puts us upon telling every thing that we are conscious is amiss in ourselves or in one another; but so far as confession is necessary to our reconciliation with such as are at variance with us..." (Matthew Henry, *ibid.*).
4. Verses 17-18: "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."
- a. The example of Elijah is recorded in 1 Kings:
 - 1) 1 Kings 17:1: "And Elijah the Tishbite, *who was* of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, *As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.*"
 - 2) 1 Kings 18:41-46: "And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for *there is* a sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, *There is* nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare *thy chariot*, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel."
 - b. "The great prophet of the Old Testament period, Elijah, is brought forward by James to illustrate the effectiveness of prayer by a 'righteous man.' The activities of this remarkable man of God are set out in great detail in First Kings. He was possessed of a faith in God which apparently knew no bounds, and his moral courage and zeal for Jehovah were unequalled by any. It seemed that no duty was too difficult or dangerous for him to perform, if it involved the work of the Lord. He himself said, 'I have been very jealous for Jehovah the God of hosts.' (1 Kings 19:10.) Though stern and unbending in principle, he was as tender hearted as a child and could and did weep over the death of the widow's child and over the waywardness of the people of Israel" (Woods, pp.307f).
 - c. Elijah possessed the same sorrows, joys, and other emotions that characterize us; he was subject to
-

the same human tendencies and had the same kind of weaknesses that are so common among us all. James states specifically that he subject to “like passions as we are.” The prophet was just like all the rest of us in nature—despite the fact that was a man of God.

- d. The prophet prayed “with great earnestness that it might not rain. Some commentators have made much of the fact that it is not expressly stated, in the Old Testament narrative, that Elijah actually prayed. It is, as we shall note later, implied; and James, an inspired man, *said* he did; and this settles it. The Old Testament does *not* say that he did *not* pray; the New Testament says he *did* pray” (Woods, p.308). "And Elijah the Tishbite, *who was* of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, *As* the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (1 Kings 17:1).
- e. In his prayer, Elijah petitioned the Almighty that it might not rain, and James tells us that there was no rain in that region for three years and six months. The text should not be construed to mean that no rain fell anywhere on the earth for this period of time; the purpose for the drought was to bring Israel back to her spiritual senses; it was not intended to be a world-wide punishment. The account of the event in the Old Testament does not specify how long the drought lasted; James said it was for three years and six months; Christ also gave this as the length of time: "But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land" (Luke 4:25).
- f. At the end of the three years and six months, Elijah prayed (1 Kings 18:41-46) that rain might come upon the land. The effects of a long drought are terrible indeed. During the 1930s, there was a great drought, turning Oklahoma into a dust-bowl, uprooting many families and bringing great hardship upon the population. We can well imagine the consequences of the great drought of the text. God often used the weather as a means of punishment, for the purpose of causing rebellious humanity to return to their Creator and Sustainer.
- g. “It is by no means necessary to assume that the incident to which James refers was a miracle—above and beyond the ordinary laws of nature. A cloud appeared in the sky and from it rain fell. Is not this the usual way in which it rains? If it be alleged that the cloud was miraculously provided; does not the Lord, in the final analysis, provide us with *all the clouds* from which rain falls? However, it was not James’ intention to affirm that God answers prayer in the same way that Elijah’s prayers, on that occasion, were answered. The purpose for which it was introduced was to show that God *answers prayer* and not to demonstrate how he does it. It is enough for us to know that he does; we may properly leave to him the providential operations by which it is accomplished. The lesson is simply this: *Elijah was a mere man; God answered his prayer; he will, therefore, answer ours as well*” (Woods, p.310).

E. James 5:19-20: Converting the Erring Saint.

1. Verse 19: “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him.”
 - a. The term “brethren” is prominently used in the epistle in reference to Christians.
 - 1) James uses the word *brethren* fifteen times in his short epistle, an expression which affirms the close attachment he felt with his fellow-Christians.
 - a) James 1:2: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations."
 - b) James 1:16: "Do not err, my beloved brethren."
 - c) James 1:19: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."
 - d) James 2:1: "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons."

- e) James 2:5: "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"
 - f) James 2:14: "What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?"
 - g) James 3:1: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation."
 - h) James 3:10: "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be."
 - i) James 3:12: "Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so *can* no fountain both yield salt water and fresh."
 - j) James 4:11: "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge."
 - k) James 5:7: "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."
 - l) James 5:9: "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door."
 - m) James 5:10: Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience."
 - n) James 5:12: "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and *your* nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation."
 - o) James 5:19: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him."
- 2) This term is especially meaningful in these two verses (5:19-20).
- b. There is a law of pardon for the alien sinner; there is a different law of pardon for the erring saint. This passage addresses the second law of pardon (the law for the erring Christian). An excellent article written by Gus Nichols many years ago delineates these **Two Laws of Pardon**:
- 1) A great many people are confused concerning the two laws of pardon. They make no distinction between the conditions of pardon to the alien sinner and the terms upon which children of God, or members of the church, are forgiven. It cannot be successfully denied that there are the two classes. Speaking to alien sinners, Jesus said: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your fathers ye will do." (John 8:44.) John speaks of the "children of God" and the "children of the devil." (1 John 3:10.) All accountable persons who are not the children of God are the children of the devil. Our loving Father offers pardon to each of these classes of persons. And it is important to know that God does not pardon both classes on the same terms. They are not on the same basis before God, and he does not deal with them as if they both stood in the same relation to him. In civil government there is a distinction between an alien, or foreigner, and a citizen. An alien cannot qualify to vote on the same terms as a citizen. If a wife leaves her husband, she may be reconciled to him and become one with him without a second marriage ceremony. (I Cor. 7:11.) But a maiden must get married before she can live as a wife.
 - 2) The Alien Sinner Needs Pardon: The alien sinner needs pardon from God. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23.) Those who die in their sins, or without pardon, cannot go where Jesus is. (John 8:21.) No accountable person can detour around the new birth and enter the kingdom of God. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into
-

the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5.) No man can be so morally good that he does not need the new birth, or that he does not need to be converted and saved. “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 18:3.)

- 3) Children of God Also Need Pardon: David was a child of God, and he sinned grievously. (2 Sam. 12.) He went so far as to commit adultery and murder. (2 Sam. 12:8,13.) The apostle Peter denied his Lord, lied, cursed, and swore, after having followed Jesus for more than three years, and was forgiven as an erring child. (Mark 13:66-72.) The best of God’s children need to be cleansed from sin along the heavenly way. (I John 1:7.) “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (I John 1:8.) “There is no man that sinneth not.” (I Kings 8:46.) “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.” (Eccles. 7:20.) This being true, the children of God need to be forgiven when they sin, as did David, Peter, and others.
 - 4) There is a Law of Pardon: Many are being taught that there is no law of pardon—that God has no certain law by which to convert and save sinners. They think God saves in different ways, and upon no certain conditions. According to them, there is no certain rule or regulation about the matter, and the sinner must grope his way in darkness and superstition, not knowing at what point salvation may be had. They are taught to feel their way and “pray through to God.” The whole matter is left in confusion. But there is a law of pardon, a certain way of salvation, and one can know exactly the time and the place where it takes place, just as he can point out the time and the place where he became a husband, or was married to his wife. While we are not saved by the “law of works,” or by a perfect moral life, we are saved by “the law of faith.” (Rom. 3:27.) To say one is converted and saved without any sort of law is to deny the Bible, which says: “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” (Ps. 19:7.) The idea that there is no law of pardon also contradicts Paul’s statement: “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Rom. 8:2.)
 - 5) The Law for Alien Sinners: Isaiah prophesied that the church would be established in the last days, and said: “Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (Isa. 2:3.) This “law” includes the terms of pardon which were to go forth from Jerusalem. Jesus said: “Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:46,47.) Pentecost is called “the beginning.” (Acts 11:15.) It was on that day that Peter began to preach repentance and remission of sins in the name of Christ. When alien sinners believed in Jesus as Lord and Christ and asked what to do to be saved, Peter said unto them: “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.) This is “the law” and “the word of the Lord” which was to go forth from Jerusalem and to be preached among all nations. Those who obeyed the gospel received the promise of the commission, which said: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” (Mark 16:16.) Such is the first law of pardon, the law to alien sinners.
 - 6) The Law to Children of God: In the case of Simon, the sorcerer, we find the second law of pardon, the law to erring children of God. Philip preached Christ unto the Samaritans; and “when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” (Acts 8:12.) Simon, the sorcerer, did the same things the others did; and if they were saved, so was he. If their faith was genuine, so was his; for the record says: “Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.” (Acts 8:13.) He had come to the promise that said: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” (Mark 16:16.) He had done what Peter told alien sinners to do on Pentecost, and thus had obeyed the first law of pardon, the law to alien sinners. However, this man Simon later sinned in trying to buy the
-

power to confer the miraculous gift of the Spirit upon others. Time enough had elapsed between his baptism and his sin that Peter and John heard about the word being received in Samaria, and came down there to confer this power upon those converted. (Acts 8:14-18.) It is false to say he turned right around and sinned after his baptism, as some have said. “But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.” (Acts 8:20-23.) Please note that Peter, the same preacher who told aliens on Pentecost to “repent, and be baptized...for the remission of sins,” told a church member, one who had already been baptized, to “repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God.” Why the different answers? Why tell some to repent and be baptized, and the others to repent and pray? Because there are two different laws of pardon—one to the alien, which includes baptism, and the other to the child of God, which includes prayer instead of baptism. Jesus taught his disciples to pray for pardon. (Luke 11:4.) He also taught them that they would have to forgive others in order to be forgiven. (Matt. 6:9-15.) John teaches disciples to confess their sins. (I John 1:9.) Hence, the second law of pardon is repentance, confession, and prayer.

- 7) Some Quibbles Refuted [Regarding the conversion and apostasy of Simon the Sorcerer].
- a) It is argued by some that Simon did not have genuine faith. However, the Bible says he believed “also,” or the same as the others in the previous verse. He was not the only one who believed as he did; neither did the others believe properly if he did not. Simon believed “also.” his faith was like the faith of the Samaritans. (Acts 8:12,13.)
 - b) But others say Simon had never been truly converted, or saved, else he would not have sinned later. One might as well argue that Peter was still a child of the devil when he denied the Lord. (Mark 14:66-72.) Children of God are sometimes so weak that they are soon removed from the right way after conversion. (Gal. 1:6.)
 - c) Others say Simon was not saved, or he would have received the Spirit along with the others and would not have had occasion to try to buy this gift. But he was not trying to buy the Spirit for himself, but rather the power to confer the Spirit upon others. (Acts 8:19.)
 - d) Still others argue that supposing he was a child of God, he could not have perished, for they say only aliens can perish. But Peter denied this theory of “once in grace, always in grace.” He said: “Thy money perish with thee.” (Acts 8:20.) He was in danger of perishing.
 - e) Some say his heart never was right before God, but Peter used the present tense and said: “Thy heart is not right.” He did not say it never had been right.
 - f) It is further argued by some that he never had repented; hence, was never saved. But he was not called upon to repent of all he ever did in his life that was wrong, but to repent of “this thy wickedness.” (Acts 8:22.) “This” sin of trying to buy the power to confer the Spirit on others was his only sin. He was not told to repent of all the wickedness he had ever done, as though he had never been converted. Furthermore, he was not told to pray that all the thoughts of his heart be forgiven, as though all his thoughts up to this time had been evil. But Peter said: “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought [singular—G.N.] of thine heart may be forgiven thee.” (Acts 8:22.) Only one “thought” of his heart needed to be forgiven, and that was the thought “that the gift of God may be purchased with money.” (Acts 8:20.)
 - g) I have heard others say that Peter said Simon was “yet” in the gall of bitterness and in the
-

bond of iniquity. But Peter did not say this. The word “yet” is not in the passage. Peter simply used the present tense and said: “Thou are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.” (Acts 8:23.)

- h) All of the foregoing quibbles are made in an effort to prove Simon was an alien sinner so as to have an example of conversion in which an apostle told an unsaved man to pray for pardon without baptism. But remember this man had already been baptized. (Acts 8:13.) It is a clear-cut case of the possibility of apostasy and the second law of pardon. It proves the fact that a child of God can so sin as to “perish,” and that if members of the church do not repent of their “wickedness” they will not be forgiven. It is a perversion of the truth to change the two laws of pardon and teach that baptism is for Christians and that aliens should pray for pardon. [Gus Nichols, *Gospel Advocate*, October 5, 1944: Put in outline form by B.W.].
- c. In view of James’ use of the term *brethren*, it is undeniable that he is speaking to Christians, members of the Lord’s church—saved people. What he says here does not apply to alien sinners, but to the people of God. When the term *brother [s]* is used in relationship between people of the same nation, the context denotes that fact (cf. Acts 2:37; 9:17). In the present case, it is obvious that the ones addressed were James’ brothers in Christ—the fourteen other cases of the use of the term by James show he had Christians in mind, not unbelieving Jews (cf. Jas. 2:1).
- d. The statement of this passage (5:19-20) shows conclusively that a brother can err from the truth and become guilty of sin so as to be lost. To remain in the saved condition, a Christian must believe the truth and be obedient to the truth—sincerely.
- 1) John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - 2) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - 3) Galatians 2:4-5: "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."
 - 4) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - 5) 1 Timothy 4:16: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."
 - 6) James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all."
 - 7) 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
 - 8) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
 - 9) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
- e. “It follows, therefore, that any lapse from what is right is simply *an abandonment of the truth* which elevated them to the point from which they fell. In the light of these facts, it is amazing that men who affect to believe the Bible would nevertheless insist that it is impossible for a child of God to sin and fall away so as to be finally lost in hell” (Woods, p.311).
- 1) Sam Morris, a follower of sectarianism, wrote a tract with the title, *Do a Christian’s Sins Damn His Soul?* Mr. Morris asserted: “The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his

soul....All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger....The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul..." (Quoted by J. Noel Meredith, ADL, p.281).

- 2) This inviting piece of false doctrine may offer comfort and consolation to deceived souls, but it is in direct opposition to common sense, the Scriptures in general, and to many Biblical statements in particular!
 - a) 1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
 - b) Galatians 5:3-4: "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."
 - c) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
 - d) Hebrews 3:12-13: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
 - e) 2 Peter 2:20-22: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."
 - f) Hebrews 12:1: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."
 2. Verse 20: "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."
 - a. James clearly teaches that a brother, any child of God, can err from the truth and stand in need of salvation, and another child can convert this erring brother. If such an erring brother is converted, his soul shall have been saved from death. This is the very point of the passage.
 - b. To "err from the truth" is to stray away from and depart from the word of God.
 - 1) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - 2) Galatians 6:1: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:24-25: "For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And
-

this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

- c. "And one convert him" means that this erring brother can be turned back [be converted again] to the truth and holiness. The word "convert" has the definition of "to change a thing or a person into something else." In the material world, there are many illustrations: corn is converted into cornmeal; cornmeal is converted into cornbread; rags are converted into paper; paper is converted into books; training and experience can convert a novice into a qualified medical doctor. This primary meaning is retained when the word is used in a religious sense: a moral and spiritual change is effected within an individual by which he is turned back to God in heart, mind, word, and life. Conversion is not pardon, but pardon follows conversion.
 - 1) Psalms 19:7: "The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple."
 - 2) Psalms 51:13: "*Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."
 - 3) Acts 15:3: "And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren."
 - d. If the erring brother is converted from the error of his way, his soul is saved from death. The main idea in *death* is "separation." When the spirit departs from the physical body, the body is dead; it is separated from the spirit. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26). When Adam and Eve transgressed God's law (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-6), they became guilty of sin and were immediately separated from the fellowship they enjoyed with God previously. When an individual dies in sin, he suffers the second death—he will be eternally separated from God (Rev. 20:12-15; 21:8; 3:11). To save a soul from death, is to bring the person back into fellowship with God so that he will avoid the second death.
 - 1) Revelation 20:12-15: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
 - 2) Revelation 21:8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
 - 3) Revelation 3:11: "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."
 - e. A "multitude of sins" are thus hidden. To hide something is to put it out of sight. "So, by enabling a brother to obtain forgiveness, we bring him back from a situation which must, if permitted to proceed, result in eternal separation from God. His sins are put away, hidden, covered. The idea of hiding or covering sin was a concept familiar to the Hebrews and associated with the cover of the ark or as it is sometimes called, 'the mercy seat'" (Merideth, ADL, p.260).
 - 1) Psalms 32:1-2: "Blessed *is he* whose transgression *is* forgiven, *whose* sin *is* covered. 2 Blessed *is* the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit *there is* no guile."
 - 2) Romans 4:6-8: "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, *Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."
-

- 3) Proverbs 10:12: "Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins."
 - 4) 1 Peter 4:8: "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."
- f. Other passages which relate to the so-called "once-saved, always-saved" doctrine.
- 1) Luke 8:13: "They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away."
 - 2) John 6:66: "From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."
 - 3) John 10:27-28: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand." This passage is often misused by the advocates of the theory, but it actually deals a death-blow to it. The conditions of his sheep (1) hearing his voice and (2) following him are necessary before the blessing of the passage applies. What if the Christian (a follower of Christ) ceases to hear his voice? What if he ceases to follow Christ?
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 10:12-13: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*."
 - 5) 1 Timothy 1:19-20: "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme."
 - 6) 1 Timothy 4:1: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."
 - 7) 1 Timothy 5:12: "Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith."
 - 8) Hebrews 12:15: "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled." *Fail of* means *fall from*.
 - 9) 2 Peter 3:17: "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness."
- g. "But Truth can be perverted and those who follow a perverted truth will not be pleasing to God. In writing to the churches of Galatia, Paul marveled that they were forsaking the true Gospel for another or false gospel. He said that there were some among them who would pervert the Gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:7). He then went on to point out that if either man or angels should preach unto them any gospel other than that which was preached they were under the anathema of God. To 'pervert' means to change one thing into another. When one perverts the Gospel of Christ, he is making something else out of it. He is twisting it. When one misinterprets it or holds that it means what it does not really mean, then the result is 'another' gospel—that is, a gospel of a different kind, one that will not save from sin. Such a gospel is the power of the devil unto condemnation. The Gospel teaches just what it teaches without regard to what any man thinks it teaches. We all will be judged by what it really does teach" (Merideth, ADL, p.536).



How Does God Answer Prayers?

I. Introduction.

A. Why should the Creator have any interest in lowly man?

1. Psalms 8:3-4: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"
2. Man is so weak and sinful, and God is so majestic and good, we often wonder how the Almighty could have any interest in us or to listen to our feeble prayers.
3. But God has shown his interest in a variety of ways.
 - a. The very fact that we exist is proof of the proposition that God cares.
 - b. The very presence of the Bible is proof that he has an interest in us.
 - c. The fact that he sent his only begotten Son to die for us is proof.
 - d. The offer of salvation from sin is excellent evidence.
 - e. The promise of an eternal home in the mansions of heaven shows it beautifully!

B. Prayer is a wonderful privilege God grants his people.

1. It is a benevolent and gracious provision in God's plan:
 - a. Matthew 18:19: "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."
 - b. Matthew 21:22: "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."
 - c. Philippians 4:6-7: "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (ASV).
2. Prayer is the means God gave by which we may approach him. One who has a sense of dependence on God will ask for his help and give thanks for the blessings received.
3. The greatest people of the Bible prayed: Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David, Hannah, Solomon, Cornelius, Lydia, Paul, Christ, and a multitude of others.

II. DISCUSSION.

A. The Bible says plainly that God does answer the prayers of his people.

1. Passages:
 - a. Psalms 65:2: "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."
 - b. James 5:16: "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."
 - c. 1 Peter 3:12: "For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil."
 - d. 1 John 3:22: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."
 - e. 1 John 5:14-15: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."
 2. God's answer to our prayers might take different forms:
-

- a. It might be to turn us down: "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12:7-9).
 - b. It might be to delay giving the request.
 - c. It might be a partial, modified approval.
 - d. It might be a gift of something more or better than our request.
 - e. It might be a quick, full approval of the request.
3. God does not hearken to the prayers of alien sinners.
- a. Psalms 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*."
 - b. Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination."
 - c. John 9:31: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth."
 - d. He heard and acknowledged the prayers of an honest seeker—Cornelius (Acts 10:1ff). But he was saved when he obeyed the gospel, not by prayer (Acts 11:13-14; 10:47-48).
 - e. He did not save Saul of Tarsus in response to prayer (Acts 9:1-16; 22:16).
- B. There are conditions to acceptable prayers.
1. One must be righteous.
 - a. James 5:16: "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."
 - b. 1 Peter 3:12: "For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil."
 2. One must pray with faith.
 - a. Romans 10:17: "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - b. James 1:6-7: "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."
 - c. 1 John 5:14: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us."
 3. One must be obedient to God's word.
 - a. Psalms 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*."
 - b. Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination."
 - c. 1 John 3:22: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."
 4. One must pray in accordance with God's will: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us" (1 John 5:14).
 5. One must have a forgiving spirit to be heard: "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:15).
-

6. One must have the right spiritual conduct: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7).
 7. One must pray in Jesus' name.
 - a. John 14:13-14: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it*."
 - b. John 16:23: "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* you."
 - c. Hebrews 4:15-16: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."
 - d. Hebrews 7:25: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."
 8. One must pray with the right motive: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts" (Jas. 4:3).
 9. One must pray with reverence.
 - a. Ecclesiastes 5:2: "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."
 - b. James 4:6: "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."
 - c. John 17:11, 25: "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as *we are*...O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me."
 10. One must actually pray, not merely desire: "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not" (Jas. 4:2).
 11. One must be persistent in prayer.
 - a. Luke 11:5-12: "And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if *he ask* a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?"
 - b. Luke 18:1-7: "And he spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?"
 - c. Romans 12:12: "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;"
-

d. 1 Thessalonians 5:17: "Pray without ceasing."

C. Prayer will not cause God to set aside his positive law.

1. God will not answer a man if he is living in sin.
 - a. Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."
 - b. Psalms 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."
 - c. John 9:31: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth."
2. Miriam incurred God's displeasure and was punished with leprosy (Num. 12-14).
 - a. She prayed for cleansing; Aaron and Moses prayed for her to be cleansed; God would not hearken to their prayers. Why?
 - b. God had already given a law for the cleansing of leprosy; Miriam had to abide by that law to be cleansed; God would not answer prayers which asked him to set aside his law.
3. "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots" (Luke 23:34).
 - a. Lord prayed for his enemies to be forgiven; they were not forgiven in direct response to his prayer, but those who were saved obtained pardon according to God's word 53 days later.
 - b. Salvation is only by the gospel of Christ.
 - 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 3) Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
 - c. When those enemies obeyed the gospel they were forgiven: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain....Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, 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 2:23,36-38).
4. The Eunuch was saved by his gospel obedience, not through prayer: "And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:36-39).
5. Cornelius was saved by obedience, not by his prayers.
 - a. Acts 10:1-6: "There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called

- the Italian *band*, A devout *man*, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do."
- b. Acts 11:13-14: "And he showed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved."
 - c. Acts 10:47-48: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."
6. Saul of Tarsus had prayed for three days, but his salvation was obtained through his obedience to the gospel.
- a. Acts 9:9-11: "And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord. And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for *one* called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth."
 - b. Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
7. Only when Christians walk in the light by obedience are their prayers heard.
- a. 1 John 1:6-7: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
 - b. 1 John 3:22: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."
8. Prayer cannot set aside God's plan of salvation. We are not allowed to ask God to save an alien sinner who will not obey the gospel.
9. If one goes beyond God's law, his prayers are not heard. We are not to ask God to forgive a wayward saint who will not change. "If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is* not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it" (1 John 5:16).
- a. Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination."
 - b. 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
- D. What means does God use in order to answer the prayers of his faithful saints?
1. God used two ways of answering prayers in Bible times: direct and indirect means.
 - a. The direct means was miraculous, and often immediately done.
 - b. The indirect means was non-miraculous, through his providence.
-

2. Some examples of his miraculous answers to prayers are the following:

- a. Samuel prayed for thunder and rain during wheat harvest, a time when rain does not fall in Palestine. "Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes. *Is it* not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness *is* great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king. So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel" (1 Sam. 12:16-18).
 - b. God sent fire to punish the complaining Israelites, but in response to Moses' prayer, God quenched the fire. "And *when* the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard *it*; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed *them that were* in the uttermost parts of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched" (Num. 11:1-2).
 - c. God answered Elijah's prayer by sending fire to consume the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the dust, and the water: "And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD *that was* broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid *him* on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. And he said, Do *it* the second time. And they did *it* the second time. And he said, Do *it* the third time. And they did *it* the third time. And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. And it came to pass at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou *art* God in Israel, and *that I am* thy servant, and *that I have* done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou *art* the LORD God, and *that* thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that *was* in the trench. And when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he *is* the God; the LORD, he *is* the God" (1 Kings 18:30-39).
 - d. At the prayer of Hezekiah, God extended his life 15 years. Both direct and indirect means were used in this example: God spoke directly but a lump of figs was used in the healing of his boil. "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying, I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done *that which is* good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered" (2 Kings 20:1-7).
 - e. The prayer of the church resulted in miraculous demonstrations: "And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou *art*
-

God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:23-31).

- f. The prayer of the brethren brought about Peter's miraculous release from prison: "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him" (Acts 12:5).
 - g. Publius was healed in response to Paul's prayer: "In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously. And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed" (Acts 28:7-9).
3. Some Bible examples of indirect, non-miraculous answers to prayer.
- a. The servant of Abraham prayed and was answered but no miracle was involved: "And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand *here* by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: *let the same be she that* thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master....And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: *I being* in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren" (Gen. 24:12-14,27).
 - b. Hannah prayed for a son, then did what she could to bring about the birth of a child. She was in the child-bearing age; thus no miracle is demanded by the details of the case. We have known couples who were not able to have children, but soon after adopting a child, the wife conceived a child. How did God answer Hannah's prayer? "And she *was* in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I *am* a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more *sad*. And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and
-

Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her. Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, *saying*, Because I have asked him of the LORD" (1 Sam. 1:10-20).

- c. Elijah prayed several times for rain; a cloud developed, and rain fell. This was not miraculous for the rain came in the usual way: from rain clouds; it would have been miraculous if the rain had come from a clear sky, or if the clouds had immediately appeared and dropped rain. "And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for *there is* a sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, *There is* nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare *thy chariot*, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel" (1 Kings 18:41-45; cf. Jas. 5:16-18).

E. There are some extreme views today regarding prayers.

1. The Deist says God created the universe, but that he then backed off and allows it to run itself; and that he has no further interest or involvement in its affairs.
 - a. They reject the incarnation and atoning sacrifice of Christ, Bible miracles, the New Testament, the church, and all the other things that are so dear to us.
 - b. Their view categorically denies the efficacy of prayer since God is concerned.
 - c. This view is a plain rejection of what the Bible says, and thus is wrong.
 2. The Pentecostals think that God answers prayers almost always, if not altogether, by direct miraculous means.
 - a. This view dictates to God the means for him to use in answering their demands.
 - b. They place a limit on God's ability to move and act in his own universe.
 - c. This view would limit the daily providence of God which does so much for man.
 - d. They also fail to see the truth that miracles have ceased.
 3. Others say that since the age of miracles has ceased in the church, that it does no good to pray since the only way God could answer would be directly by miracle.
 - a. One of this persuasion cannot see how God can act without that act being a miracle. Thus for him to answer a prayer would be a supernatural action.
 - b. "But I cannot see how he could answer without a miracle; I cannot understand how the providence of God can work."
 - c. But can anyone explain how a miracle does what it does? How did the angel loose Peter's chains without waking the guards? How did he open the gates? (Acts 12).
 - d. Can you explain how water was turned into wine? How were the bread and fish multiplied to feed many thousands of people? How was a withered arm restored? How was sight given to the blind? Just HOW does a miracle do what it does? There is no scientific formula that can explain any miracle.
 - e. It is as hard to explain a miracle as to explain how God's providence works.
 4. Then there are others who claim that the only benefit to be obtained by praying is the psychological effect praying can have on the individual's heart and mind.
-

- a. But this would make prayer as effective for the infidel as it is for a Christian.
- b. And the Moslem, Hindu, idol worshipper, animalist, *et al*, would get as much out of prayer as a follower of Christ.

F. How does God answer our prayers today?

1. God is not limited to acting miraculously to bring about his will.
 - a. He rules his universe. He controls the storms, the sea, the planets, lightening, etc. by means of his natural laws.
 - 1) Colossians 1:15-17: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
 - 2) Hebrews 1:1-4: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."
 - 3) Job 38:8-11: "Or *who* shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, *as if* it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling-band for it, And brake up for it my decreed *place*, and set bars and doors, And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?"
 - b. Since he had the ability and power to create the universe and prescribe the laws by which it operates, he is certainly able to guide these laws and shape and guide human affairs when he deems necessary.
2. It is not our prerogative to tell God how to answer our prayers, but any answer he gives will be in harmony with his will: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 John. 5:14-15).
 - a. It was the will of God that the age of miracles in the church should cease.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 13:8-13: "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."
 - 2) Ephesians 4:11-14: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

- 3) Micah 7:15: "According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things."
 - 4) Mark 16:20: "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
 - 5) Hebrews 1:1-4: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."
- b. Therefore, it is the will of God that the prayers we utter today will be answered by some other means than by miracles.
 - c. This means that God answers prayers today by means of his providence, since this is the only alternative.
3. The word providence is from the Latin word *providentia* which means "foresight."
 - a. Our English word suggests the idea that God will provide: providence.
 - b. It is used to denote the biblical idea of "the wisdom and power which God continually exercises in the preservation and government of the world, for the ends which he proposes to accomplish" (McClintock & Strong, Vol. VII, p.707).
 - c. Prayers are answered by this special providence God uses in reference to his saints.
 4. By his providential working, the Lord fulfills the promise to his children to provide for our food, clothing, shelter and other necessities. God fulfills this promise by his providence.
 - a. Psalms 37:25: "I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."
 - b. Matthew 6:11: "Give us this day our daily bread."
 - c. Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - d. But who can explain all the details that are involved? "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7).
 5. "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me*" (Heb. 13:5-6). How does God fulfill this promise? That he has promised to do so is the point of importance; we do not need to be concerned with how his providence operates to fulfill the promise.
 6. We ask God to heal the sick; if God answers our prayers, how does he heal them?
 - a. If he did so miraculously, then no ailing saint should ever die (since God acts without partiality). But the Bible shows that we must all die and be raised.
 - 1) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:
-

Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

- 3) Hebrews 9:27: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."
- b. How does he answer these prayers then? By means of the doctors, nurses, drugs and other medicines, hospital facilities and equipment, various treatments and procedures, by the attitude of the patient, and by our own good interest. God's providence works in conjunction with all of these things, and heals many. There are two kinds of healing: miraculous divine healing (which is not being done today) and divine healing (which is God's providential means of healing now).
 - c. How else could it be done? I cannot explain exactly how his providence works any more than I can explain how a miracle operates.
 - d. We are not to doubt or worry how he answers these prayers; our lot is to pray fervently that he will provide what is needed—if it is his will.
7. Suppose a 70-year-old man obeys the gospel after a life of wickedness; his wife reports that she had prayed for his salvation for 40 years.
- a. The Lord heard and answered her prayers but saved her husband by the gospel.
 - b. Perhaps the providence of God led this man through a series of experiences and circumstances which lead to a softening of this man's heart.
 - c. Whatever the details were, they remain beyond our knowledge and comprehension. "...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5:16).
8. The disciples prayed for the kingdom to come (Mt. 6:10); they preached that this kingdom was "at hand."
- a. But while they expected an earthly kingdom. they received a spiritual kingdom.
 - b. The Lord often brings about more and better things than what we prayed for. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20).

III. CONCLUSION.

A. God is able to do some wonderful things for his people.

1. His resources are boundless, his love unlimited, his kindness genuine, his interest unsurpassed, his ear ever open, his hand ever extended, his eyes always alert to our problems, and his heart ever filled with compassion toward his people.
2. Shall we doubt his power, knowledge, skill, or his willingness to aid? Shall we doubt the resources of heaven? Are not all the elements of nature under his control?
3. God is able to see the dangers yet unsuspected by us; he is able by his providential actions to avert trouble.
 - a. We would not have many of our present problems if we had prayed more fervently and often in the past.
 - b. Solutions to our problems are best obtained in preventing their occurrence.
4. Our daily prayer should be, "Lead us not into temptation...." Also, ask him to lead us away from trouble, heartache, danger, anguish and unneeded hardships.

B. The story of Esther illustrates beautifully how God's providence answers prayer.

1. Esther was a Jewess who was born in the land of captivity. She was selected to be the new queen of Ahasuerus, the king of Persian Empire. He was the most powerful ruler on earth at the time.
-

2. Haman, a prominent politician, became angry at the Jews and connived to get a law passed which would bring about the utter destruction of the Jewish race.
 3. Esther 4:13-17: "Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, *then* shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this? Then Esther bade *them* return Mordecai *this answer*, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which *is* not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him." Mordecai, Esther's kinsman who had reared her from childhood, came to her with the request that she take action to deliver her people (Esther 4:13-15). She told him to gather all the Jews together and fast (always accompanied with praying) for three days; she and her maidens would do likewise (Esth. 4:16-17).
 4. On the third day, Esther entered the palace and was invited to approach the king.
 - a. If he had not extended the royal scepter, she would have been seized by the guards and slain: "All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, *there is* one law of his to put *him* to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days" (Esth. 4:11).
 - b. The king knew that there was something very special in her mind or else she would not have risked death to come before him. He asked that she present her request and it would be granted, unto half of the kingdom. She simply invited him and Haman to attend a banquet later that day (Esther 5:1-5).
 5. At the banquet, the king asked Esther what her real request was, for he knew that the invitation to the banquet was not the important matter she had in mind. She invited the king and Haman to attend yet another banquet the next day. At this latter banquet, he again raised the question about her real request to which she replied: "Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request: For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage" (Esth. 7:3-4).
 - a. He wanted to know who had caused the evil law to be passed: "Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so? And Esther said, The adversary and enemy *is* this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen" (Esth. 7:5-6).
 - b. When the king stepped from the room to think, Haman pleaded with the queen; the king returned and thought he was trying to "force" the queen.
 - c. Haman was hanged (on the gallows he had prepared for the Jew, Mordecai).
 6. A law of the Medes and Persians could not be repealed, but could be amended. Mordecai, who was exalted to fill Haman's place, suggested that the king cause an amendment to be drawn up by which the Jews would be able to defend themselves when the day of their execution came. They succeeded in resisting their enemies.
 7. The name of God is not found in the book of Esther, yet his hand is seen on every page. How were the Jews delivered? By the plans and efforts of Mordecai. But those plans would have been useless if Esther had not been queen; how did she get to be queen? God's providence! How were the Jews
-

delivered? By that same providence of God! God was not going to allow his promises, plans, and purposes to come to nought. Thus, he heard and answered the prayers of Esther, Mordecai, and all the Jews—no miracle was involved; everything seemed as natural as could be, but the providential hand of God was guiding, shaping, and fulfilling the complex experiences that were transpiring.

C. Has his providence led you to a softened heart that is ready to obey the gospel?

Prayer

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. There is much skepticism and ignorance about prayer.

1. Infidels say it is waste of time. J.W. McGarvey told of one such fellow who proposed a test by which the efficacy of prayer might be put to the test. He suggested that the patients in one hospital ward should be prayed for, while no prayers were to be offered for patients in another ward.
2. To pray for one group and intentionally avoid praying for the other group would be wicked. And to put God to the test is also sinful.
3. Prayer is not a mystical incantation which results in a miraculous or mysterious cure.

B. Why don't we always pray as we should?

1. Some saints never or seldom pray due to lack of faith in prayer, or a failure to see a need for prayer.
2. It might be due to short-sightedness, a lack of faith, or lack of knowledge, or a lack of diligence.
3. There is much in the Bible on the subject of prayer. We are given much assurance that God hears; we have good reason to pray.

II. DISCUSSION.

A. The Bible sets forth the meaning of prayer.

1. Prayer is the expression of our heart's desire spoken to God.
 - a. Romans 10:1: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."
 - b. 1 Samuel 1:10-11,13,17: "And she *was* in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head....Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken....Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of him."
2. Prayer reveals something about us.
 - a. It shows our closeness to God: we are willing to share our innermost thoughts and desires with him.
 - b. It shows that we believe he can answer and is willing to help us.
3. Lack of prayer also shows something about ourselves.
 - a. If we do not pray we show a lack of faith in prayer.
 - b. If we do not pray we show we do not want or need God's help and blessings.
 - c. If we do not pray we live at a distance from God.

B. The Bible sets forth conditions for acceptable prayer.

1. Acceptable prayer comes from one who is willing to obey.
 - a. Cornelius was heard because he sought to know God's will (Acts 10).
 - b. Prayers of rebellious or disobedient hearts are not heard.
 - 1) Psalms 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*."
 - 2) Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be*

abomination."

- 3) John 9:31: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth."
 - c. God hears prayers offered by pure hearts.
 - 1) 1 Peter 3:12: "For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil."
 - 2) 1 John 3:22: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."
 2. Acceptable prayer must be offered with full assurance of faith.
 - a. 1 Timothy 2:8: "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."
 - b. James 1:5-8: "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. or let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways."
 3. Acceptable prayer must have the endorsement of Christ.
 - a. 1 Timothy 2:5: "For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
 - b. Hebrews 4:14-16: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."
 - c. We have no personal credit in the Bank of Heaven, but with Christ's endorsement our requests are honored.
 4. Acceptable prayer must be fervent and sincere.
 - a. Psalms 17:1: "Hear the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, *that goeth* not out of feigned lips."
 - b. Colossians 4:12: "Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."
 - c. James 5:16: "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."
 5. Acceptable prayer must be unselfish. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts" (Jas 4:3).
 6. Acceptable prayer must be regularly offered, not a mere emergency measure.
 - a. Romans 12:12: "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer."
 - b. Colossians 4:2: "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 5:17: "Pray without ceasing."
 7. Acceptable prayers are offered in accordance with God's will. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us" (1 John 5:14).
 - a. God's will is revealed in the Bible (cf. Numbers 12; Luke 23:34; Acts 2:38; 9:1-9; 22:16). God answered the prayer of Christ [Luke 23:34] when those people obeyed the gospel.
-

b. God's will in our daily affairs may be expressed by his providence.

C. Prayer is powerful.

1. James says prayer avails much: "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" (Jas 5:16).
 - a. He does not say the full extent of our requests is always given; our requests may not be given when or in the manner we desire.
 - b. A carefully aimed bullet may miss the exact target, but it still accomplishes something.
 - c. We cannot track down the full effect of every prayer. Our prayers for the sick, for peace, for the spread of the kingdom, for missionaries, for the lost, for saints may be answered without our being appraised of the details.
2. Elijah's prayers were powerful. "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (Jas 5:17-18).
 - a. Why did he pray that it might not rain? Not because they had had too much rain, or that the rivers were overflowing, but to cause repentance. The full narrative of this event is found in 1 Kings 17:1—18:40.
 - b. He prayed again, and rain fell (1 Kings 18:41-45; Jas 5:17-18, 16).
3. James did not say every prayer will be heard and answered.
 - a. Formal word-speaking prayers are not heard.
 - b. The prayers of rebellious, disobedient men are not heard.
4. God hears the prayers of righteous people.
 - a. If we are sick, we do not call for some wicked person, or a hypocrite, or a lukewarm member to pray for us.
 - b. We want the prayers of the most devout and righteous people.
 - c. A righteous person must pray fervently, sincerely, and often.

D. There is a great need for prayer in this time of discouragement and uncertainty.

1. Every Christian needs to pray.
 - a. We need to pray personally and privately. We ought to set aside a regular time and place to pray.
 - b. We need to pray fervently, sincerely, daily, and scripturally.
 2. Each family needs to pray together.
 - a. We need to pray when we sit down to eat, and at other times when possible.
 - b. Hearing the father pray should be familiar sound to children.
 3. Christians need to pray together.
 - a. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).
 - b. We ought to pray when special needs arise.
 - c. We ought to pray for our country, for its leaders, for the gospel to have free course in the world, and for the work of kingdom.
 4. We need to have great faith in the power of prayer.
-

- a. The Lord indeed hears and is touched by our prayers. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do....For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:13,15,16).
- b. God is our caring, loving, and reachable Father; he is interested in hearing and answering our prayers.
- c. God is powerful; he is able to answer since he is the Living God; he does not have to work a miracle to answer prayer.
- d. God is wise enough to answer in the right way; he does not always respond in our way.
- e. We ought to be fully persuaded in the effectiveness of prayer, and pray accordingly.

III. CONCLUSION.

A. Erring saints need to pray for forgiveness.

1. Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
2. James 5:16-20: "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. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. 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."
3. 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. ⁸ 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. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

B. Alien sinners need to obey the gospel; prayer does not save such a person.

1. Acts 16:30-33: "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway."
 2. Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."
 3. Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 4. Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, 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."
 5. Saul of Tarsus came to believe on Christ, repented from his sins, and confessed his faith; at this point he spent many hours praying fruitlessly; he was told to arise and obey the gospel.
 - a. Acts 9:1-11: "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto
-

Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: *it is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, *I am here*, Lord. And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for *one* called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth."

- b. Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
-

Music of the New Testament Church

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. There are many things which make the Lord's church different from all other religious groups.
1. Perhaps the most obvious is that we do not use instruments of music in worship as they most often do.
 2. Our not using instrumental music (IM) is not due to our:
 - a. Not liking that kind of music.
 - b. Being too poor to buy one or more musical instruments.
 3. Our non-use of IM in worship is based on Biblical principles:
 - a. John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - b. Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - c. 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
 - d. There is no New Testament authority to use IM in the worship of God by the church on earth.
- B. The history of how IM came to be acceptable in worship by religious bodies is enlightening.
1. The first mechanical instrument of music (an organ) was introduced in a group of people claiming to be Christians in 670 A.D.
 - a. It was introduced by Pope Vitalian I; he acted on his own authority, not by Bible authority.
 - b. The introduction of this instrument created problems and was removed.
 2. IM was introduced again about 800 A.D., and again faced some opposition, but was retained anyway.
 3. The Greek Church refused it and still does not use it. But the modern denominational world has almost entirely accepted it.
 - a. IM is so prominently used that we are thought most peculiar because we do not use it.
 - b. Most people who notice its absence ask why we do not have "music" in our worship. The only kind of music they are aware of is instrumental music; they do not realize that singing is music.
- C. It is obvious that IM was used in worship during part of the Mosaic Age and that many use it now.
1. But the Jews rejected God as their ruler, **then** instrumental music came in.
 - a. 1 Samuel 8:4-7: "Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them."
 - b. 1 Chronicles 15:16-28: "And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren *to be* the singers with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy....And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, *was* for song: he instructed about the song, because he *was* skilful. And Berechiah and Elkanah *were* doorkeepers for the ark. And Shebaniah, and Jehoshaphat, and Nethaneel, and Amasai, and Zechariah, and Benaiah, and
-

Eliezer, the priests, did blow with the trumpets before the ark of God: and Obedom and Jehiah *were* doorkeepers for the ark. So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the house of Obedom with joy. And it came to pass, when God helped the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams. And David *was* clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers: David also *had* upon him an ephod of linen. Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps."

- c. 2 Chronicles 7:6: "And the priests waited on their offices: the Levites also with instruments of music of the LORD, which David the king had made to praise the LORD, because his mercy *endureth* for ever, when David praised by their ministry; and the priests sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood."
 - d. Amos 6:5: "That chant to the sound of the viol, *and* invent to themselves instruments of music, like David."
 - e. Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."
2. It was not until the Great Apostasy had fully developed that professed believers began to use IM in worship; they did so without New Testament authority.

II. ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP.

- A. "Playing an instrument is a natural talent and since it came from God, IM is proper in worship."
1. Set forth in a syllogism, the argument states:
 - a. All natural talents are things which may be used in Christian worship.
 - b. Playing a piano is a natural talent.
 - c. Therefore, playing a piano is a practice which may be used in Christian worship.
 2. But what proves too much, proves nothing: if IM is approved because it is a natural talent, then every other natural talent could be used. Could one play basketball as an act of worship? Could one pitch horseshoes as an act of worship? Is hog-calling a suitable act of worship? Is long-distance spitting?
 3. God's system is not based on natural (earthly) principles.
 - a. Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
 - b. Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death."
 - c. Matthew 15:8-9: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men."
 - d. Mark 7:13: "Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."
 4. Christianity is based on faith:
 - a. 2 Corinthians 5:7: "For we walk by faith, not by sight."
 - b. Romans 10:17: "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
-

- c. Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
- d. Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
- e. John 4:23-24: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
- f. 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).

B. "If we can have an instrument in the home, we can have it in the church."

1. Set forth in a syllogism, the argument states:
 - a. All things which can be rightfully had in the home can be rightfully had in the church.
 - b. Mechanical instruments may be had in the home.
 - c. Therefore, mechanical instruments may be rightfully had in the church in Christian worship.
2. But the home is governed by moral law; the worship of God is governed by spiritual law (the New Testament).
 - a. The head of the home (the family) is the father; the head of the church is Christ.
 - b. Things are proper in the home if they are morally right.
 - c. Things in the church are right only if they are scripturally right (authorized by the New Testament).
3. There are things that are morally right but which are religiously wrong.
 - a. It is morally right to wash hands, but wrong if done as an act of worship (Mark 7:1-13).
 - b. It is morally right to count beads, but wrong if done as worship, for it is not commanded or otherwise authorized in the New Testament.
 - c. It is morally right to eat meat, but wrong if it is used on the Lord's table as part of the Supper.
 - d. It is morally right to discipline a child in the home, but wrong if we do so as an act of worship.
 - e. It is morally right to have infants as part of the home, but there is no authority for infant membership in the church.
4. While it is right to have an instrument and to play it in the home, it is wrong to use IM anywhere in an act of worship.

C. "Instrumental music is used in heaven, therefore is right for use by the church on earth."

1. But who said there are mechanical instruments in heaven? What would or could a spiritual being do with a physical instrument?
 - a. 1 Corinthians 15:50: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." Heaven is the home of the soul, not of the physical body; nothing physical will be in heaven.
 - b. Revelation 5:8: "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints." The harps are no more literal than the censers; the censers represented prayers. What did the harps represent? A thing cannot represent itself. Revelation is comprised
-

of symbols: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John" (Rev. 1:1).

- c. Revelation 14:2: "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps." John heard a voice which he likens to many waters, thunder, and harpers harping. These were not the literal sounds of water, thunder, and harps.
 2. Even if one could establish the presence of mechanical instruments in heaven, it would be meaningless to the question. "If God has it in heaven it is his business, but as he did not put it in the church, we have no right to do so" (Foy E. Wallace, Jr.).
 - D. "Since instrumental music was used in Old Testament worship, it is authorized for us today."
 1. Psalm 150: "Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD."
 2. Psalm 66:13,15: "I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows....I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats." Why pick out the instrument and leave the rest? David offered animal sacrifices as part of his worship; may we do so? May we burn incense?
 3. David, Solomon, Jacob, and many others practiced polygamy. May we do so today?
 4. To illustrate the inconsistency further, consider this situation:
 - a. A man responds to a denominational preacher's invitation; he brings with him a bowl of incense and demands that he be admitted into that church along with his incense: he is refused!
 - b. Another man responds and brings with him down the aisle a lamb which he insists on offering as the Old Testament required: he is refused!
 - c. Another man responds and brings with him several wives which he insists on keeping: refused!
 - d. Yet another responds bringing with him his harp and insists on keeping it: he is accepted!
 5. One who tries to justify the use of IM by appealing to the Old Testament reveals a serious lack of understanding of the Bible.
 - a. Colossians 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."
 - b. Acts 15:10: "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"
 - c. Hebrews 10:9: "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."
 - d. Galatians 2:21: "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."
 - e. Galatians 5:4: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."
 - f. 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be
-

ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

6. To appeal to the Old Testament is to reject the authority of Christ.
 - a. Matthew 17:5: "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."
 - b. Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - c. Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - d. Hebrews 1:1-4: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."
- E. "Since the New Testament does not expressly forbid instrumental music in worship, we may use it."
1. Set forth in a syllogism, the argument states:
 - a. All things which the Bible does not expressly forbid may be used in Christian worship today.
 - b. Instrumental music in worship is not expressly forbidden by the New Testament.
 - c. Therefore, IM may be used in Christian worship today.
 2. But again, what proves too much, proves nothing.
 - a. The Bible does not expressly forbid LSD, marijuana, heroin, cocaine, and abortion; it does not expressly forbid the use of bacon and eggs in the Lord's Supper, using beads as we pray, using icons in our worship, and a host of equally repulsive and unauthorized things and activities.
 - b. The Bible did not expressly forbid the offering of strange fire, but Nadab and Abihu were put to death immediately for this error. "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD....And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean" (Num. 10:1-2,10).
 - c. God did not expressly forbid Moses to strike the rock, but he sinned and was punished when he did so. "Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts *also*. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (Num. 20:8-12).
 3. There is a principle we use every day which is also used by God in his word.
-

- a. When we address a letter, it is not necessary to inscribe a list of all those for whom the letter is not intended. We exclude all those not included by identifying the individual who is to receive the letter. The name and address on the envelope excludes all other states, cities, streets, and people.
 - b. If we are driving to Atlanta, the signs we see do not tell us, "This is not the right road to Atlanta." Rather, we pick the roads which are identified positively as leading to Atlanta.
4. Likewise, when God specified the item or activity he wants, all others are excluded.
- a. When God specified gopher wood for the ark, Noah knew that all other types of wood were excluded and prohibited.
 - b. When God specified a lamb for sacrifice, he excluded pigs, alligators, horses, snakes, buzzards, armadillos, tarantulas, etc.
 - c. If God had wanted any kind of music, he would have simply said, "Make music."
 - d. If he had wanted only singing, he would have said, "Sing." And that is what he did say!
 - 1) Ephesians 5:18-19: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
 - 2) Colossians 3:16-17: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
- F. "Instrumental music is just an aid, it aids the singing just like a cane aids walking."
1. The argument asserts that IM does nothing more than a songbook pitch pipe, tuning fork, shaped notes, lights, pews, meeting houses, blackboards, etc. This appears to be a sound argument, but only on the surface!
 2. We must be able to determine whether something is a true aid or an unauthorized addition. To illustrate, consider the "cup" question.
 - a. Is it scriptural to have more than one cup on the Lord's table? No, for "cup" is used in the New Testament in reference to the contents.
 - b. When we have individual cups we have added nothing to the Lord's Supper for the cup the Lord spoke of is the fruit of the vine, the element of which we partake; it is not the container.
 - c. To have more than one container for the loaf or the fruit of the vine does not add anything to the Lord's Supper; multiple containers are true aids, not additions; they expedite the action of the worship commanded.
 3. Eyeglasses pertain to the realm of observation. There are various ways to observe: we may observe by feeling, by hearing, by seeing, by smelling, and by tasting.
 - a. These are co-ordinates: they are equal; they are different ways of observing. In no way would seeing be an aid to feeling; in no case would feeling be an aid to seeing.
 - b. Things which are co-ordinates cannot be sub-ordinate, and therefore cannot be aids. When one uses eyeglasses to see, he is doing just one thing: seeing. Glasses do not help one to feel, smell, taste, or hear; they help him to see!
 4. A walking cane pertains to the realm of travel. One may travel by walking or by riding; these are co-ordinates; they are different ways to travel.
-

- a. In no case is walking an aid to riding; in no case is riding an aid to walking.
 - b. When one uses a cane as an aid to walking, he is walking—he is not riding; the cane adds nothing to the activity, but aids in the one action in progress: walking.
 - c. Using a walking cane is not a different way to travel.
5. An organ relates to the realm of making music. There are different ways of making music: one may sing, hum, or play an instrument. These are co-ordinates.
 - a. Singing and playing an instrument are co-ordinates just as seeing and feeling, and walking and riding are co-ordinates.
 - b. To sing is one way of making music; playing an instrument is another way of making music; to play is a different action from singing; singing is a different action from playing.
 6. When one is using artificial lighting to help him use his eyeglasses to see the words and notes in the song book as he sings, he is doing only one thing: singing.
 - a. The lights, glasses, and song book are true aids; they do not add anything to the one action.
 - b. But if one uses a fiddle, an additional action is added: he is not only singing, he is playing.
 - c. Remember that the Lord specified singing; he said nothing about the fiddle!
 7. Those who use this argument cannot consistently use their standard argument that “David used it and so we can use it.” IM was not used as an aid in the Old Testament situation, but rather as the worship itself. "And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy *place*: (for all the priests *that were* present were sanctified, *and* did not *then* wait by course: Also the Levites *which were* the singers... *being* arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets:) It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers *were* as one, **to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD**; and when **they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then** the house was filled with a cloud, *even* the house of the LORD; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God" (2 Chron. 5:11-14).
- G. “Instrumental music is authorized because the apostles went into the worship of the Jews.
1. The argument assumes that IM was used and that the apostles engaged in the worship. There is no proof for either. This argument is similar to the one made by advocates of infant church membership: Lydia’s household was baptized; there must have been infants among them; therefore, infants are to be brought into the church! Both are spurious arguments.
 2. The apostles entered the temple and various synagogues on many occasions when religious services were being conducted. They went there to preach the gospel (Acts 3, 4, 13).
 3. Even if IM was used in synagogue worship, the worship offered was in accordance with the Law of Moses, and was not Christian worship.
- H. “The Greek word *psallo* means to play an instrument.”
1. The argument has caused some debaters to affirm that it is sinful **not** to use IM in worship.
 2. Greek scholars report that *psallo* had these various meaning at different times through the ages: to pluck the hair; to twang the bowstring; to twitch a carpenter’s line; to touch the chords of a musical instrument, that is, to make instrumental music; to touch the chords of the human heart, that is, to sing, to celebrate with hymns of praise.
-

- a. The basic idea in *psallo* is “touch.” But the item that is touched is not inherent in the word.
 - b. The basic idea of *baptidzo* is “dip” or “immerse.” But the element in which one is immersed is not inherent in the word. In the New Testament, some were baptized with the Spirit; some are to be baptized with fire; others are baptized with water; others were baptized with suffering. One must consult the context to find the element in which *baptidzo* is accomplished.
 - c. One must also consult the context to discover the item that is to be “*psallo-ed*.”
3. Ephesians 5:19: “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” Paul commands “singing” (*adontes*) and making melody” (*psallontes*) [present participle of *psallo*]. “Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody **with your heart** to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19, ASV).
 - a. The instrument is identified as “your heart.” An instrument is required but it is not mechanical. If a mechanical instrument is inherent in the word, then no one could sing praise to God without a mechanical instrument! This passage requires it! But the instrument is the heart!
 - b. Two things are required: singing **and** making melody with the heart.
 4. Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace (loving favor; gratitude) in your hearts to the Lord.” Paul requires “singing” (*adontes*) with grace in your hearts unto God.”
 - a. What he called “making melody” in Ephesians 5:19, he called “with grace” in this passage.
 - b. The two passages are parallel; each sheds light on the other.
 - c. The **heart** is identified as the instrument used in the praise described.
 5. The word *psallo* is used five times in the New Testament; one time it is translated “making melody” and four times translated “sing.” The 47 scholars who gave us the KJV and the 101 scholars who gave us the ASV were fully qualified to know the real meaning of this Greek term; they properly translated the word.
- I. “I like instrument music, therefore it is proper to use it in worship of God.”
1. This may be the most honest argument of all!
 2. But who is to be honored in worship? The individual? Or God? What does God like? The only way anyone can know what honors God is if it is revealed—in the New Testament.
 3. If the logic behind this argument is consistently applied, it would destroy the only authoritative standard there is in religion: God’s word. It would open the door for anything anybody would want to bring in. It has already led to rock music, dancing, etc., in modernistic churches.
 4. Nadab and Abihu wanted to offer strange fire—but God consumed them with fire! What a needed lesson for those who would please themselves in worship today!
 - a. Judges 21:25: “In those days *there was* no king in Israel: every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.”
 - b. Romans 15:4: “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”
 - c. Jude 10: “But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.”
 - d. 1 Corinthians 10:7,11: “Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play....Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”
-

- e. 1 Corinthians 14:33,40: "For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints....Let all things be done decently and in order."

J. "All references to singing in the New Testament refer to individual singing and not to corporate worship."

1. This asserts that there is no New Testament authority for congregational singing. The proponents admit there is no New Testament authority for IM; but since there is nothing against either, they say it is all right anyhow! They claim that as long as a practice is not forbidden, it is authorized! They assert that "congregational singing is in the realm of choice or expediency." They say the same about IM. "Neither is authorized but both are acceptable!"
2. The basic argument was answered under "E." But it is important to point out their error in claiming that the passages regarding singing are not directed to congregations, but only to individuals.
 - a. Every act of worship in which the congregation engages must be done by each individual. The congregation prays when the individuals which make up the congregation prays; the congregation worships by giving when the individuals worship by giving; so also with eating the Lord's Supper, studying God's word, and singing.
 - b. One stated purpose of singing (in Col. 3:16) is to the end of "teaching and admonishing one another." This is accomplished when the congregation sings "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." Individuals may surely sing in private (cf. Jas. 5:13; Eph. 5:19), but the requirement of Colossians 3:16 is fully realized only when others are present; this is congregational singing.
3. The argument asserts that IM is a thing that is permitted, but not required; thus IM is equated with the eating of meats (cf. Rom. 14:1-6; 1 Cor. 8); it is claimed to be an expediency.
 - a. An expedient is that which expedites; there can be no expediency where there is no obligation. Since God gave us the obligation to assemble, then a meeting house becomes an expediency.
 - b. If he had given us the obligation to use IM in worship, then the **kind** of instrument would have been an expedient. But he gave us no such obligation.
 - c. He gave us the command to sing; playing an instrument is not an expedient to singing. Singing is one action; playing an instrument is another action altogether.

III. WHAT DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACH ON THE SUBJECT OF MUSIC IN WORSHIP?

A. First, notice the principle of exclusion.

1. The Great Commission contains some generic commands.
 - a. GO—this is a generic command; it leaves the method of going to our good judgment.
 - b. TEACH—this is generic; we may teach using a blackboard; we may teach orally or by written message; we might do it face-to-face or over the radio or television.
 2. The story of Noah and the ark illustrates exceedingly well the issue before us.
 - a. God specified gopher as the kind of material Noah was to use in constructing the ark. He did not include oak, pine, locust., etc.
 - b. But if there were different kinds of gopher wood, Noah's instructions would have permitted him to choose the gopher wood he thought best to use.
 3. Old Testament people were commanded to offer certain animals in their sacrifices; if no particular animal was identified, they could have offered any animal and be in compliance with the order.
 - a. In the Passover (Ex. 12), God commanded a lamb from the sheep or goats, a male of the first year, without any blemish.
-

- b. These specifics excluded all other kinds of animals, every female lamb, every lamb above the first year, and all lambs which were physically imperfect.
 - c. No one has any difficulty understanding this with reference to the Old Testament people, but most people seem to think that we are special today, and are not limited in what we can do in religion. But no one has the right to disregard God's word (Gal. 1:6-9; 2 John 9-11; John 12:48; Rev. 20:12-15; Rom. 14:10-12; cf. Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:1-12).
4. We live and worship under the Christian system, being governed by the New Testament. Under the New Testament, God's commands **singing**.
- a. There are two kinds of music: vocal and instrumental. If he had commanded us simply to make music, we could play an instrument, or sing a song, or play and sing.
 - b. But he commanded singing, thus playing a mechanical instrument of music is excluded. It is as surely excluded as were the strange fire (Lev. 10:1-2,10), Moses striking the rock (Num. 20), and the use of pine instead of gopher wood in Noah's ark.
 - c. 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
 - d. 2 John 9: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son" (ASV).
 - e. James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is become guilty of all" (ASV).

B. Every New Testament passage that speaks on the subject of music in worship, specifies singing.

1. Matthew 26:30: "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives."
2. Mark 14:26: "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives."
3. Acts 16:25: "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them."
4. Romans 15:9: "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name."
5. 1 Corinthians 14:15: "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."
6. Ephesians 5:19: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
7. Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
8. Hebrews 2:12: "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee."
9. James 5:13: "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms."

IV. INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC CANNOT FULFILL THE PURPOSES GOD INTENDED BY SINGING.

A. The New Testament gives several purposes which singing is intended to accomplish.

1. To teach (Col. 3:16).
 2. To admonish (Col. 3:16).
 3. To praise God (Jas. 5:13; Acts 16:25).
-

B. When Christians sing:

1. We make melody with our hearts unto the Lord (Eph. 5:18-19).
2. We sing with grace in our hearts unto God (Col. 3:16).
3. We sing with the spirit (1 Cor. 14:15; cf. John 4:24).
 - a. To sing with the spirit means to sing with one's will, mind, and emotions; it must be sincere or else it is meaningless.
 - b. 1 Corinthians 14:14-17: "For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified."
 - 1) The passages show that the individual's spirit is meant ("my spirit"). Paul is saying in the context: "My heart is involved in the prayers and songs, but since it is in another language not understood by others, it is not profitable to them (or to me if I do not have the gift of interpretation). Thus, when I sing, I will sing with sincerity and in a language in which all can participate." The same is true with prayer.
 - 2) This passage shows that the early Christians used singing in their worship and that singing should be done so as to be intelligible and edifying to all present. If this is not done, the singing might as well be in a foreign tongue (1 Corinthians 14:16-17). The sounds produced by a mechanical instrument can offer no instruction to the individual, and neither can it glorify God.
4. We sing with understanding.
 - a. John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 14:15: "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."
5. What part could a dumb mechanical instrument of music have in the points named above? How could a mechanical instrument teach or admonish?

V. **UNINSPIRED COMMENTS OF FAMOUS RELIGIOUS LEADERS ARE INFORMATIVE.**

- A. Martin Luther: "The organ in the worship of God is an ensign of Baal."
 - B. John Wesley: "I have no objection to the organ in our chapels provided it is neither heard nor seen."
 - C. John Calvin: "It is no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of tapers or revival of the other shadows of the law. Catholics foolishly borrowed it from the Jews."
 - D. Adam Clarke: "I am an old man and an old minister, and I here declare that I have never known instrumental music to be productive of any good in the worship of God, and have reason to believe that it has been productive of much evil. Music as a science I esteem and admire, but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This the abuse of music, and I here register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of that Infinite Spirit who requires his followers to worship him in spirit and in truth."
 - E. Charles H. Spurgeon: "I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also....I would as soon pray to God with machinery as to sing to God with machinery."
 - F. Alexander Campbell: "To all whose animal nature flags under the oppression of church service, I should
-

think instrumental music would not only be a desideratum but an essential prerequisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But to all spiritually minded Christians such...would be as a cowbell in a concert.”

- G. J.W. McGarvey: “We cannot adopt the practice without abandoning the only ground upon which a restoration of New Testament Christianity can be accomplished.”

VI. **THERE ARE MANY SCRIPTURES WHICH PROHIBIT THE USE OF IM IN WORSHIP.**

A. The principle of prohibition and warning given people who lived under the Old Testament Law.

1. Deuteronomy 4:2: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."
2. Proverbs 30:6: "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."
3. Romans 15:4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Numerous Old Testament cases illustrate and teach us against going beyond God's word, doing anything not clearly authorized.

B. The New Testament offers warnings.

1. Galatians 1:8-9: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
2. James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all."
3. Revelation 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."
4. 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).

C. Paul presented the whole counsel of God to the brethren in Ephesus.

1. Acts 20:20, 27: "*And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house....For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."
2. He made no mention of instrumental music. He instead told them to sing (Eph. 5:19). Therefore, IM was not profitable to them, nor was it included in God's counsel.

D. The apostles were guided into all truth, which did not include Instrumental Music in worship.

1. John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
 2. 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 3. 1 Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
-

4. 2 Peter 1:3: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."
5. The apostles were guided into all truth, God has delivered all things that we need for life and godliness, he has given us everything we need to be made spiritually mature (perfect), and has warned us not to go beyond his written word: and no where in the New Testament did he say anything about our having the right to use IM! The subject of IM was not even mentioned!

VII. THERE ARE SEVERAL DIRE CONSEQUENCES OF USING IM IN WORSHIP.

- A. Those who use the instrument often have pushed it into the worship.
 1. They force the instrument in, against the will and conscience of others. It is not a matter of indifference to them. It is a source of contention and strife which cause offenses.
 2. Matthew 18:6-7: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!"
 - B. The use of IM in worship is a violation of God's law.
 1. God requires us to teach and admonish each other and praise him.
 2. The instrument is dumb: it cannot do any of these things, and does not enhance these things.
 3. It is an unauthorized addition to God's revealed plan for worship.
 - C. Instrumental Music turns the heart of the worshipper from God to his own satisfaction.
 1. Instead of producing and encouraging devout worship, it becomes a musical entertainment.
 2. It encourages an emphasis on the sound, rather than on the quality of the heart of the would-be worshipper.
 - D. Acceptance of the instrument in worship is a rejection of the authority of the Scriptures.
 1. It is a more than a violence to the silence of the Scriptures.
 2. Once a person has accepted one unauthorized activity, the door is wide open for the introduction of more and more unscriptural beliefs and practices.
 3. The Disciples of Christ group turned into a very liberal, modernistic denomination in the deepest sense. Their first steps were to accept IM into their worship and adopt the Missionary Society as a means of spreading their message. The floodgates were thrown open when the instrument was introduced and they have gone onward to become a very liberal denomination.
 - E. Consequences of rejecting the authority of the Scriptures.
 1. The acceptance of IM goes far deeper than merely adopting an aid: in reality it shows one's attitude toward God and his word.
 2. To reject the authority of the Bible is to reject God.
 - a. 2 Samuel 12:9-10: "Wherefore hast thou **despised the commandment of the LORD**, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be* thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast **despised me**, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife."
 - b. Malachi 1:6-7: "A son honoureth *his* father, and a servant his master: if then I *be* a father, where *is* mine honour? and if I *be* a master, where *is* my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O
-

- priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD *is* contemptible."
- c. Luke 10:16: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."
 - d. Luke 16:10: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."
 - e. James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all."
3. If we reject the Scriptures as final authority in spiritual affairs, we repudiate the authority of God, who speaks to the human family today through Christ (Heb. 1:1-4).
- a. Matthew 17:5: "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."
 - b. Luke 24:47: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
 - c. John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
 - d. Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - e. 1 Corinthians 16:22: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha."
 - f. Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - g. 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."

VIII. CONCLUSION.

A. The New Testament and our good judgment dictate:

1. That we do not use IM in weddings, when spiritual songs are involved; and at any time at the meeting house; or anywhere else when there is a possibility that we will appear inconsistent.
2. That we do not have IM in any of our worship or work activities.
3. That we do not use IM privately as we sing spiritual songs. IM is unauthorized in any worship act, in public or in private.

B. The church of our Lord is different from all other religious organizations.

1. We have noticed one of these differences.
 2. We are scoffed at, sneered at, and harshly ridiculed because we have no instruments of music in our worship of God.
 3. This is far from being a shame: it is an indication that we are following God!
 - a. Matthew 5:11-12: "Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."
 - b. 2 Timothy 3:12-17: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue
-

thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

- c. 2 Timothy 4:1-4: "I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."
- d. 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."
- e. 1 Peter 4:4: "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*."

C. Time is rapidly passing, opportunities are flying by.

1. Your present decision about your spiritual welfare may very well determine your future destiny.
 2. Let us resolve that if we need to obey the gospel, to do so now!
 3. If we need to change our thinking and practice regarding instrument music, let us resolve to do so now.
-

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- American Standard Version*, (ASV), Thomas Nelson and Sons, New York, NY
- Analytical Greek Lexicon*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1970
- Annual Lesson Commentaries* (ALC), Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, TN, 1946, 1953, 1961
- Barnes, Albert, *Notes On the New Testament, James-Jude*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1949
- Barnes, Albert, *Notes On the New Testament, Matthew and Mark*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1976
- Boettner, Lorraine, *Roman Catholicism*, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Philadelphia, 1962
- Boles, H. Leo, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*, Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, 1936
- Christian Courier*, Wayne Jackson, Stockton, CA
- Coffman, Burton, *Commentary on Matthew*, ACU Press, Abilene, Texas, 1974
- Coffman, Burton, *Commentary on James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2, & 3 John, Jude*, Firm Foundation Publishing House, Austin, Texas, 1979
- English Study Bible* [ESB], Harold Littrell, Star Bible Publications, Ft. Worth, TX, 1994
- Halley, Henry, *Halley's Bible Handbook*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1965
- Holman Bible Dictionary for Windows*, Version 1.1g, Parson Technology, Hiawatha, Iowa, 1991, 1994
- Horne, Thomas Hartwell, *Introduction To The Scriptures, Vol. IV*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1970
- International Bible Dictionary*, Logos International, Plainfield, NJ, 1977
- Jamieson, Robert, Fausset, A.R., Brown, David, *A Commentary Critical, Experimental and Practical*, Vol. III (JFB), Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1973
- Josephus, Flavius, *Josephus, Complete Works*, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI, 1960
- Kik, J. Marcellus, *An Eschatology of Victory*, Presby & Reformed Publishing Company, 1971
- Lipscomb, David and Shepherd, J.W., *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians*, Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, 1966
-

- Lipscomb, David, *Questions Answered*, Gospel Advocate Co., Nashville, 1969
- Lockyer, Herbert, *All the Miracles of the Bible*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1961
- McGarvey, J.W., *Biblical Criticism*, Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, 1956
- McGarvey, J.W., *A Commentary on Matthew and Mark*, Gospel Light Publishing Company, Delight, AR, 1875
- PC Study Bible*, BibleSoft, Seattle, Washington
- Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*, H.B. Hackett, Editor, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1971
- Studies in James*, Dub McClish, Editor, Annual Denton Lectures [ADL], Valid Publications, 1990
- Studies in James and Jude*, Robert Taylor, Jr., Taylor Publications, Ripley, Tennessee, 1987
- Thayer, Henry, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*, The National Foundation for Christian Education, Marshallton, DE
- The New King James Version*, [NKJ], Thomas Nelson Company, Nashville, 1987
- Thiessen, Henry C., *Introduction to the New Testament*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1943
- Turner, J.J., *The Book of James*, William C. Johnson, INC., West Monroe, Louisiana, 1976
- Vine, W.E., *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, MacDonald Publishing Co., McLean, VA
- Webster's New World Dictionary, Second College Edition*, The World Publishing Co., New York, Cleveland, 1968
- Woods, Guy N., *A Commentary on The Epistle of James*, Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, 1965
- Woods, Guy N., *Questions and Answers Open Forum*, Freed Hardeman College, Henderson, TN, 1976
- World Book Encyclopedia*, Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, Chicago, IL, 1964
- Young's Concordance*, Robert Young, Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., Grand Rapids, MI
-