

Round Top Church Christian Fellowship

Sermon Series in James

God's Bond-Servants of His Peace

James 1:1-12

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(All Scripture unless noted is from New American Standard Bible)

James 1:1-12 1 James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad, greetings.

Date of Letter: 44 - 49 AD is tied to the purpose for writing ~ There is no mention of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem that occurred by 70 A.D. Therefore, the letter is written before that time. There is noted the dispersed Jewish believers which most scholars pin to be a reference to King Herod in 44 A.D. This letter is written to Jews who had converted and were adjusting to a new way of thinking about their relationship with God. This is a transitional letter. **Acts 12:1** Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church, in order to mistreat them.

Addressed to: Like the book of Hebrews, the book we call James is addressed to the Jews. We know this because in verse one, the “twelve tribes” is specifically addressed. We also learn that the twelve tribes are dispersed geographically to parts outside of Israel. Through Pax Romana (Roman Peace), there was ease of travel and commerce. Therefore, James had confidence that his letter would travel over Roman roads and be carried by sail of ships to reach Jews in all corners of the empire.

Who is the Author: Now, James, himself, is the Lord's brother. There are only four men in the New Testament referred to as James. The apostle James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John, was martyred in 44 A.D. (Acts 12:3). The others have no standing in early groups of believers, and there is no evidence for them to be the author. In addition, language studies have made comparisons of words used in James' Speech at the Jerusalem Counsel, chronicled in Acts 15, which are used in the book of James.

Author's Spiritual Relationship to Jesus: James calls himself a bond-servant. He is delivering the message that he is completely at the will and call of God and his Lord Jesus Christ. As a writer for God, James is conveying the proclamation that the words in the letter he writes are in reality from God and no other. James is saying that he is the instrument through whom God is writing. This letter carries the greatest authority.

Matthew 13:55 "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?"

Galatians 1:19 But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

Setting the Stage: The opening words in the book of James tell us a lot about people of faith. James calls himself a bond-servant of God. James does not stop with God, he adds, "of the Lord Jesus Christ". Perhaps we should write letters in this way. I have often commented in the past, as many of you did in your generation, about addressing school papers with the date ending in A.D. The A.D. is an abbreviation for Anno Domini, meaning "In the Year of our Lord." This is recognition of the birth of Christ. This is recognition that God incarnated himself as a person to live in the flesh, to show us that He knows what it is like to be a human being in a fallen world and come out spirit-filled, to overcome Satan and his fallen powers. This A.D. is a statement that God lives in people that He created for His

purposes. This A.D. is a statement that we live in the year our Lord, meaning that we are His people, and, yes, as James, a disciple himself, as a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. The fallen secular world has changed the dating system. Instead of using A.D., they use B.C., meaning Before the Common Era. (They use B.C.E. for Before the Common Era. They try to escape the truth of the presence of God in the flesh Who came and lived with us. The changers of the date system still cannot escape the question as to what happened at the time of the change between B.C. and B.C.E.; obviously, more strange teaching.

James uses four names: God, Lord, Jesus, and Christ.

Lord 7750 times (a few, not many, of these are used to address a leader)

God 4355 times (very few reference god, as in pagan deities)

Lord God 2315 times (Above 80% used in Old Testament)

Jesus 911 (He Saves)

Christ 521 (Messiah, Anointed One)

Jesus Christ 271

Lord, Jesus Christ 100

Peter in Acts 6:36,37 makes use of the God, Lord, and Christ.

³⁶ "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that **God has made Him both Lord and Christ**-- this **Jesus** whom **you** crucified."

³⁷ Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

Even though believers living under King Herod are persecuted and some put to death, James considers it all joy. James is forecasting to believers that through trials and tests endurance will be produced, which they will need. James points that the outcome of endurance is completeness. James tells them that they will lack in nothing. If you are a “health and wealth” procrastinator, reading this verse quickly will serve your purposes well. However, a little serious thought about to whom the audience James is writing brings a more accurate light to the reality of being complete and lacking nothing. Lacking nothing does not mean that God wants you to be monetarily or materially wealthy.

God, through James, is writing to people who are on the run. They had to relocate and protect themselves from the government. They are **not** focused upon their earthly possession but on their very lives. How much personal property could they have relocated being under the pressure of Herod’s government? No U-Haul in those days. Not much. They hold the most valuable thing in their heart that actually possesses them:

The love of the Lord (1 John 4)

The Spirit of the Lord (Romans 8:9)

The life of the Lord Jesus Christ lives in them. (Galatians 2:20)

This is what sustains them, not the pursuit of physical possessions. They have an eternal world view. When all physical possessions are stripped away, it is the spiritual relationships that you have that count; first with your Lord, then with your family, your parents, your spouse, your children, grandchildren and your friends and neighbors. These are the most important possessions. We know that our temporal goods do not pack in box to take with us to heaven, but we do know that all believers are in heaven together with the Lord. We will be with our believing loved ones in Heaven. This is what we take with us. These relationships are eternal.

Continuing in James 1 . . .

James 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brethren,
when you encounter various trials,

³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

⁴ And let endurance have *its perfect result*,
that you may be *perfect and complete*, lacking in nothing.

There are other passages in the Bible that blend with these verses. We will focus on the word *perfect* and *complete*.

Matthew 5:48 "Therefore you are to be *perfect (teleios)*, as your heavenly Father is *perfect (teleios)*.

James 1:4 And let endurance have *its perfect (teleion) result*, that you may be *perfect (teleioi) and complete (holokleroi)*, lacking in nothing.

Strong's 5046 *perfect, having reached its end complete*

Strong's 3648 *complete, entire*

Peace in Hebrew is *Shalom*, meaning *completeness as a person*.

Therefore, when we are perfect, when we are complete in the Lord, we are at peace. Peace is the goal of God in our lives. God incarnated himself as Jesus Christ to bring an end to the enmity and strife, to bring peace between Him and His creation.

Ephesians 2:14-22

¹⁴ For He Himself is our **peace**, who made both *groups into* one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,

¹⁵ by abolishing in His flesh the **enmity**, *which is* the Law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the **two into one new man**, *thus establishing peace*,

¹⁶ **and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.**

¹⁷ And He came and preached **peace** to you who were far away, and **peace** to those who were near;

¹⁸ for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

²⁰ having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*,

²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;

²² in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

Continuing in James . . .

James 1: 5 But if any of you **lacks wisdom**, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach,

and it will be given to him.

⁶ But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

In our pursuit of perfection and completeness, with its end quest to be at peace with God and your neighbor, to what does James point? In actuality, God, through James, points to **wisdom**. The man in the Bible associated with wisdom is King Solomon (Third King of the United Monarchy who ruled after King David) who lived about 1000 years before the book of James was delivered to mankind. We have the books of Ecclesiastes, Proverbs and the Psalms. The reference to wisdom is not addressing academic knowledge. Just about anyone can learn facts and figures. It is the application, the living out of the facts and figures that takes sound reasoning; it takes wisdom.

Ecclesiastes 7:12 For wisdom is protection *just as* money is protection. **But the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the lives of its possessors.**

Take note that money in this world can protect a person, but money has its limits. It is Wisdom that preserves lives.

Isaiah 11:1-2 **1** Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.

2 And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, **The spirit of wisdom and understanding**, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

God then, in James 1, expounds upon the values of being complete as compared to temporal values; picking up in James 1:7. . .

James 1:7 For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,

⁸ *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

⁹ But let the brother of humble circumstances glory in his high position;

¹⁰ and *let* the rich man *glory* in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away.

¹¹ For the sun rises with a scorching wind, and withers the grass; and its flower falls off, and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

We are looking for a blessing from God. We are blessed in many things. First and foremost, we are blessed for the opportunity to gain eternal life. This is the goal of persevering under trial, under persecution. God has James point out that the end result of surrendering (being a bond-servant of our Lord Jesus Christ) is to receive the **crown of life**.

James 1:12 Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial;
for once he has been approved,
he will receive the **crown of life**,
which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him.

When God's Holy Spirit speaks to the apostle John on the Island of Patmos to write the book we call Revelation, we have a witness to the crown of life.

Revelation 2:8 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this: . . .

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Revelation 2:10-11 ¹⁰ 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the **crown of life.**

¹¹ 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. **He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.'**

Revelation 21:8 ⁸ "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part *will be* in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, **which is the second death."**

The word “overcomer” is found in other passages of Scripture.

1 John 5:4-5 Overcomers

⁴ For whatever is born of God **overcomes** the world; and this is the victory that has **overcome** the world-- **our faith.**
(John 3:16)

⁵ And who is the one who **overcomes** the world, but he who **believes** that Jesus is the Son of God?