

JAMES

Book note for James

The book was probably written by James, the Lord's brother (Gal. 2:12), which probably places it after Ac. 15:13-20 which summarizes his stand on works (cf. note to Gal. 2:12). James addresses his epistle to the Jews, Israel, and thus the emphasis on works with grace instead of grace alone which is the gospel to the Gentiles.

Chapter note for James 1

1 We are to rejoice under the cross, 5 to ask patience of God, 13 and in our trials not to impute our weakness, or sins, unto him, 19 but rather to hearken to the word, to meditate in it, and to do thereafter: 26 otherwise men may seem, but never be truly religious.

Jas 1:1

James = Jacob = one who takes by the heel; one who stays; supplanter.

Jas 1:2

It is temptation that robs a Christian of his joy, but James says that temptation, too, is to be accounted as God's joy.

Jas 1:8

4:8. See note to Mat. 6:24.

A double-minded man is like the proverbial donkey that starved to death between two haystacks because she could not decide which to eat from.

Jas 1:10

Isa. 40:6 v.f. The rich is to rejoice for this (same sentence as v. 9).

Jas 1:11

Thus the rich man ends up the same as the poor. Vss. 9 and 10 pertain to believers. The fate of the unbelieving rich is told in the story of Lazarus (Lu. 16:20 v.f.).

Jas 1:12

Re. crowns, see 2 Cor. 5:10 note.

Jas 1:13

This appears to contradict the temptation of Abraham. See note to Gen. 22:1.

Jas 1:15

Lust relates to taste, and to yen.

Jas 1:18

Implies salvation by grace, not works.

Jas 1:19

Pr. 19:11.

Jas 1:20

Prov. 10:19.

Jas 1:21

Hence James doesn't teach salvation by works, only evidenced by works.

Jas 1:27

God's definition of *religion*. Cf. note to Ac. 13:43.

N.B., "God and the Father" counters Unitarians and supports the deity of Christ.
Eph. 5:20.

Chapter note for James 2

1 It is not agreeable to Christian profession to regard the rich, and to despise the poor brethren: 13 rather we are to be loving and merciful: 14 and not to boast of faith where no deeds are, 17 which is but a dead faith, 19 the faith of devils, 21 not of Abraham, 25 and Rahab.

Jas 2:1

This would amount to an unequal yoke. Pr. 28:21!

Jas 2:4

“Of” in the sense of “from.”

Jas 2:8

Lev. 19:18; Mat. 22:39; Mk. 12:31; Lu. 10:27; Jn. 13:34; Rom. 13:9. . A neighbour is anyone who has need and the other is in a position to help.

Jas 2:10

Deu. 27:26.

Jas 2:11

Modern versions mostly change “he that said” to “that law which.” This is not warranted because God actually spoke the ten commandment to the people of Israel, he did not give it in writing on the tablets of stone until later. See Ex. 20:19, 22; in the latter verse note the plural, “you,” instead of the singular “thee”; Deu. 5:22; 9:10.

Jas 2:13

Mat. 7:2; Jas. 4:11; Mat. 6:15.

Jas 2:14

Hence judgment is a condemnation. Judge (verb) is something else. 1 Cor. 6:2-5.

Christ saves, coupled with faith in Christ which must be laid hold of. Cf. Gal. 2:20; 1 Tim. 3:13; Rev. 2:13; 14:12.

This verse is the darling of the church of Rome when it comes to arguing that works are required for salvation. They ignore who is being addressed in the context (1:1), that it is not for the Pauline dispensation.

The case for works is not as simple as the RCC would like to make it out. When one “comes to faith,” one is saved “unto good works” (Eph. 2:10, q.v.). Believers are to bear fruit, an act involving support or sustenance, thus works. A branch that bears no fruit is dead. This is the sense in which James writes to believers, not in the RCC’s sense of earning salvation by good works.

Jas 2:15

1 Jn. 3:17.

Jas 2:17

Some have evidently taken these admonitions the wrong way -- Gal. 2:12 vs. Ac. 15:13-21.

Jas 2:18

By changing “faith without thy works” to “faith by thy works,” as some margin notes and new versions do, the contrast is lost and the passage becomes meaningless since it only argues who does the most works instead of a faith without works.

Jas 2:23

Gen. 15:6 which see for the full meaning of *believe*. Psa. 88:18.

2 Chr. 20:7; Isa. 41:8.

Jas 2:24

I.e., one needs to act on faith. Therefore one is saved by faith, justified by works (Gal. 2:16). Contrast Rom. 4:2 and see note there for resolution of apparent contradiction.

Jas 2:25

Josh. 2:1 v.f.; Josh 6:15-25; Mt. 1:5; Heb. 11:31.

Jas 2:26

This implies that the soul without the spirit is also dead.

Chapter note for James 3

1 We are not rashly or arrogantly to reprove others: 5 but rather to bridle the tongue, a little member, but a powerful instrument of much good, and great harm. 13 They who be truly wise be mild, and peaceable, without envying, and strife.

Jas 3:2

I.e. “pick the wrong word,” a word which isn’t truly reflective of the situation. E.g., Christ and the Pharisees vs. Moses and people in Num. 20.

Jas 3:7

Gen. 11:25.

Jas 3:14

Particularly, do not lie against the Lord Jesus or the Scripture.

Jas 3:15

Compare Lu. 16:8.

Jas 3:16

Babel, Gen. 11.

Chapter note for James 4

1 We are to strive against covetousness, 4 intemperance, 5 pride, 11 detraction, and rash judgments of others: 13 and not to be confident in the good success of worldly business, but mindful ever of the uncertainty of this life, to commit ourselves and all our affairs to God's providence.

Jas 4:1

The first war recorded in Scripture was the capture of the cities of the plain in Gen. 14:2.

Because of this verse, conscientious objectors such as the Quakers and the Mennonites preach that all war is bad and due to human lusts and greed. Jesus disagrees as we see in Rev. 19:11 and the war with Gog and Magog of Rev. 20:7-9. During the Second World War Robert Moyer (1886-1944), Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Minneapolis (1942-1944), wrote an article entitled "A Christian's View of War." He wrote:

"Did Christ teach anything about war? The answer is yes.

"In Luke 22:36 he said, 'He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.' That is, if they had no purse, no money, they were to sell their garment in order to buy a sword.

"Some insist that what our Lord meant was that the sword was to be used merely for self defense. All right, admit it so. At least it does not mean that, and this is sufficient to overthrow any theory of nonresistance held by pacifists, conscientious objectors, Quakers or any other sect. It is a decisive testimony from the mouth of the Lord himself against any such views.

"Someone says, 'Yes, but look at the Sermon on the Mount.' All right, look at the Sermon on the Mount. Remember that Christ prefaced that sermon by saying, 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, of the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil' (Mat. 5:17). Do not force into the Sermon on the Mount meanings that are not there; for the words of our Lord do not mean the abolition of armies and navies or that we are to do away with magisterial functions on the part of nations, because such functions are part of the Law of the Prophets.

"I know that Isaiah 2:4 says, 'They shall beat their swords into plowshares'; but I also that Joel says, 'Beat your plowshare into swords.' Again, this is not a contradiction when the Word is rightly divided. The time to beat your swords into plowshares is not now, with the world in its present-day condition.

"Some seem to think that when Christ said, 'love your enemies,' he was saying something new. That was not new, for God taught the same thing through Moses. See Lev. 19:18 and 34: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'

"Shall a Christian go to war? The answer is yes. If your government calls, you are obligated to obey. In 1 Peter 2:13, 14, Peter adds his voice to that of Paul. Peter says:

"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.'

"Paul says 'every soul'; Peter says 'every ordinance.' Yes, a Christian should bear arms in obedience to the commands of the government, for the government is authorized by God to 'bear the sword'; hence that government may delegate any of its citizens as its representatives in its military or naval obligations. We have an organized society, and it is right. We have an organized police force, and it is right. We have an organized military force, and it is right. There is little difference between an armed police force and an army.

"Is our hope a warless world? The answer is no. Our hope is the coming of our Saviour to take us to himself. That is the next thing in the program of God.

"Are you ready to meet him? Things are not going to get better; but worse. The horrible drama of the Great Tribulation is still to be played upon this earth, but the true child of God will miss that; for when tribulation is upon the earth, the saints will be rejoicing with Christ in the air."

Jas 4:2

1 Jn. 3:15.

Jas 4:3

I.e., totally selfish motive. Psalms 78:18, 41 say that is tempting God, which limits him.

Jas 4:4

The ASV and NASV, omit adulterers and makes the admonition fit women only. The NRSV makes it fit men only. The RSV makes refers to “Unfaithful creatures,” and the NIV addresses “Adulterous people.”

Jas 4:5

Since this is not a direct quote, many think this verse an error. Particularly, modern critics do not realize that “saith” does not always mean a direct quote, it can be an inference. When one realizes that, the thing is taught in scripture and so scripture does “say” that our spirit lusteth to envy. Consider the examples of Joseph and his brethren (Gen. 37:11); Psa. 37:1; 73:3; 106:16; Pr. 23:17; Mat. 27:18; Mk. 15:10; Rom. 1:29; 13:13-14, etc. Modern versions will generally weaken the indictment of the human spirit and transfer it to God’s Spirit such as in the RSV’s “He yearns jealously over the spirit which he has made to dwell in us,” or the ASV’s “Doth the spirit which he made to dwell in us long unto envying?” or the NIV’s “Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envied intensely?” and realizing that this transference of fault from man to God could cause problems, adds a footnote: “Or *that God jealously longs for the spirit that he made to live in us; or that the Spirit he caused to live in us longs jealously.*”

Probably Gen. 6:5, q.v., is the closest cross reference to this verse.

Jas 4:6

1 Pet. 5:5; Rev. 3:17.

Jas 4:7

One must submit to God before one is able to resist the Devil successfully.

Jas 4:8

1:8. Set your heart on the things of God and the mind will follow. Mat. 6:22.

Jas 4:10

Note use of “shall” here is third person, and thus emphatic.

Jas 4:11

2:13

I.e., the law of grace -- cf. 1:5; 2:8.

Jas 4:13

As in “go to [the] now,” not “go to, now.” Cf. Gen. 11:3; Pr. 21:1.

Jas 4:14

Job 7:9; 30:15.

Chapter note for James 5

1 Wicked rich men are to fear God's vengeance. 7 We ought to be patient in afflictions, after the example of the prophets, and Job: 12 to forbear swearing, 13 to pray in adversity, to sing in prosperity: 16 to acknowledge mutually our several faults, to pray one for another, 19 and to reduce a straying brother to the truth.

Jas 5:3

Thus gold can rust, or will rust in the future.
For an exposition on last days see Heb. 1:2.

Jas 5:7

Joel 2:23.

Jas 5:9

Rev. 3:20.

Jas 5:14

Afflicted is not the same as sick (v. 13).
I.e., the elders come to the sick, not the sick to the elders. Thus no "healing service."

Jas 5:15

A special prayer. It saves, not the anointing.

Jas 5:16

Ex. 32:11 v.f. Modern versions change "faults" to "sins." The Greek word here is *paraptoma* which occurs 23 times and is translated as fall, fault, offence, and trespass. It is translated as sin three times, in Eph 1:7; 2:5; and Col 2:13. The usual Greek word translated as sin is *hamartia* (G264, 265, & the most common by far G266), which occur 186 times, being translated as sin all but six times the rest of the time. G266 occurs 174 times and is translated as "sin" every time but one.

Jas 5:17

1 Ki. 17:1 v.f.; 1 Ki. 18:1.

Jas 5:19

(Ac. 28:27; Jas. 1:20) Fourteenth of fifteen occurrences of "convert" in Scripture. The implication is that one can be saved and still be in need of conversion about some things, e.g., Peter in Lu. 22:32.

Jas 5:20

(v. 19; Psa. 19:7) The last of fifteen occurrences of "convert" in Scripture.