

James — Belief in Action

(Formerly *Epistle of James by Cross-Reference*)

*This is a self-study course
designed to help you discover
for yourself, from the Bible,
some important basic truths about
living the Christian life.*

how to study the lesson

1. Try to find a quiet spot free from distractions and noise.
2. Read each question carefully.
3. Look up the Scripture reference given after each question. Make sure you have found the correct Scripture passage. For example, sometimes you will find yourself looking up JOHN 1:1 instead of I JOHN 1:1.
4. Answer the question from the appropriate Bible passage. Write, in your own words, a phrase or sentence to answer the question. In questions that can be answered with a “yes” or “no” always give the reason for your answer . . . “Yes, because. . . .”
5. If possible, keep a dictionary handy in order to look up words you don’t understand.

6. Pray for God's help. You *need* God's help in order to understand what you study in the Bible. Psalm 119:18 would be an appropriate verse for you to take to God in prayer.

7. *Class teachers using this course for group study will find some helpful suggestions on page 47.*

how to take the self-check tests

Each lesson is concluded with a test designed to help you evaluate what you have learned.

1. Review the lesson carefully in the light of the self-check test questions.

2. If there are any questions in the self-check test you cannot answer, perhaps you have written into your lesson the wrong answer from your Bible. Go over your work carefully to make sure you have filled in the blanks correctly.

3. When you think you are ready to take the self-check test, do so without looking up the answers.

4. Check your answers to the self-check test carefully with the answer key given on page 48.

5. If you have any questions wrong, your answer key will tell you where to find the correct answer in your lesson. Go back and locate the right answers. Learn by your mistakes!

apply what you have learned to your own life

In this connection, read carefully JAMES 1:22-25. It is only as you apply your lessons to your own life that you will really grow in grace and increase in the knowledge of God.



Testing

Introduction (1:1)

The Writer

Modern opinion tends more and more to identify the writer as James, the Lord's brother (GALATIANS 1:19) not the James of the apostolic band.

Perhaps the special appearance of the risen Lord to the brother (I CORINTHIANS 15:7) qualified him for this work. He was put in charge of the mother church at Jerusalem.

Clement of Alexandria tells us that "Peter, James and John (the apostles most honored) chose James, the Lord's brother to be Bishop of Jerusalem after the Lord's ascension."

It should be noted that, after the death of the apostle James, the brother of John (ACTS 12:2), Peter sent the news to James, the Lord's brother (verse 17) at Jerusalem. Later at the Jerusalem Council (ACTS 15) this James summed up the discussion (verses 6-29) and formulated the letter which is striking in phraeseology as compared to the Epistle of James.

When Written

There is much to favor the view that this was the first Christian Epistle. If written before Paul's letters, the notion of some that there is contradiction between Paul's views and those of James, falls at once. James says much which supplements Paul's teachings. The careful student cannot fail to see that the language of James presupposes all evangelical doctrines as taught by Paul.

James was opposed to a lifeless, intellectual Christian profession and puts special emphasis on works as the fruit of faith and the evidence of justification. All is based on the new birth (1:17, 18, 21) and faith in Christ (2:1, 22) and carries no suggestion of salvation on the basis of works.

Contrasts

Just as the one gospel of Christ has been given four settings in the four records of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, so the more advanced Christian truths are given different emphasis by the four writers—Peter, James, Paul and John.

James, like Matthew, had the Jew especially in mind. The problem of the Jew was that he meant well but had no power to perform (compare ROMANS 10:2, 3). James shows that a personal faith in Christ will put into the heart a desire to do His will and will give power unto righteousness.

There would have been something sadly lacking in the New Testament had there been no Epistle of James, for his message was especially helpful to the devout Jew in correctly understanding the gospel. There were those who argued that the Christian gospel had no place for good works: it was all grace and therefore not practical in its outlook. James shows that Christianity is GRACE AT WORK and that those who profess to be born of God, while manifesting no fruit in practical service to others, know nothing of the real *possession* of salvation.

1. Which “James” was the writer of this Epistle?

1:1 _____

2. What brothers did James have through his father, Joseph?

MATTHEW 13:55 _____

3. Were there also sisters?

MARK 6:3 _____

4. Even though he is Christ’s brother, what is James content to call himself?

1:1 _____

5. For whom did James especially prepare this letter?

1:1 _____

After the captivities, the remnants of the twelve tribes became amalgamated. Tribal distinctions of territory had long since been lost at James' time. While Hebrews was written to the professing Christian Jews in Palestine, James writes to them wherever scattered.

Endure testing (1:2-12)

6. How should we respond to temptation?

1:2 _____

"All joy" is better rendered, "every kind of joy." There are varied elements of joy to be found in victory over the different forms of testing. The word here translated "temptation," as commonly used in the New Testament, stands for trials that take the form of suffering, rather than enticements to sin. Compare LUKE 22:28; ACTS 20:19; I PETER 1:6. This temptation might cause us to doubt God's readiness to help or His ability to work everything out for our good; therefore, it is the trying and the proving of our faith in Him.

7. Why is it that the believer, instead of sinking into a dejected state of mind, can count his testings a source of joy?

ROMANS 8:28 _____

8. Then what should the Christian do in the midst of suffering?

I PETER 4:16 _____

9. Toward what are his trials bringing him?

1:3 _____

10. What is the final product of patience?

1:4 _____

4

The final product of patience, perfection and entirety describes Christian maturity, not a state of perfect holiness.

11. What strength enables us to overcome temptation?

PSALM 71:16 _____

12. What part does self-reliance play in enduring temptation?

PROVERBS 3:5 _____

13. What is it that God is always willing to give us?

1:5 _____

Literally, “and doesn’t scold one for asking.”

14. How is it possible for a Christian to get divine discernment in matters that trouble him?

PROVERBS 2:3-5 _____

15. What does God have on deposit for all His children, in readiness for the needs that may arise?

PROVERBS 2:7, 8 _____

16. Give an example of one who claimed what this promise offers.

I KINGS 3:9-12 _____

17. How did God receive this petition?

I KINGS 3:10 _____

18. Considering these passages, what does wisdom mean in the Scripture?

19. What help is wisdom when temptation comes?

20. What is the one condition which we must meet before we receive wisdom?

1:6, 7 _____

21. What does James compare to the tossing sea?

1:6 _____

22. How was Abraham an example of unwavering faith?

ROMANS 4:18-20 _____

23. Who will not receive anything from the Lord?

1:7 _____

Do not overlook the emphasis put on faith at the very outset of this epistle. Both here and in verse 3 faith means a confidence in God's willingness and ability to help.

24. Describe a double-minded man.

1:8 _____

A literal translation of "double-minded man" is "one who has two souls"—or one whose mind is like that of two men.

Verses 9-11 discuss poverty and wealth, which are two temptations that often lead the Christian astray. James says "the brother in humble circumstances" should "glory in his elevation [as a Christian, called to the true riches and to be an heir of God]." He adds that "the rich [person ought to glory] in being humbled [by being shown his human frailty]."—Amplified New Testament

25. How long will the rich man have his money?

1:10, 11 _____

26. Why shouldn't we seek either poverty or wealth?

PROVERBS 30:8, 9 _____

27. How do both James and Jesus regard the man who endures?

1:12; MATTHEW 5:11, 12 _____

28. What does the man who endures receive?

1:12 _____

29. What should be our attitude when we are tempted?

I PETER 1:6, 7 _____

check-up time No. 1

You have just studied some introductory material about James and also some truths about testing. Review your study by rereading the questions and your written answers. If you aren't sure of an answer, reread the Scripture portion given to see if you can find the answer. Then take the following test to see how well you understand important truths you have studied.

In the right-hand margin write "true" or "false" after each of the following statements.

1. Solomon's wisdom was given to him by God in answer to his request. _____
2. James compares the double-minded man to twin mountain peaks. _____
3. James teaches that testing is something to be very upset about. _____
4. This epistle was written by James the son of Zebedee. _____
5. James addressed his epistle to the Jews of Palestine. _____
6. When tried and tested it is important to lean hard on one's own understanding of life. _____
7. The man who endures will receive a crown of liberty. _____
8. The Bible teaches that the Christian should seek to be either wealthy or poor. _____
9. The believer can know that God is working out all the circumstances of life for his own good. _____
10. One of God's purposes in testing His children is to produce patience in them. _____

Turn to page 48 and check your answers.