

Scripture: James 1 v 1

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

Subject: Wisdom for Godly Living Part 1

The Men with the Name of James

There are several men referred to with the James in the N.T. each one is specifically referred too. We will look at each in turn and seek to identify the James who wrote this letter. They are as follows.

- **James the brother of John and son of Zebedee (Matthew 10:2)**
Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; the first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother.
- **James the son of Alphaeus (Matthew 10:3).**
Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;
- **James the half-brother of Jesus (Galatians 1:19).**
But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.
- **James the son of Mary (Matthew 27:56).**
Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.
- **James the father of Jude (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.

The identity of.

The Man behind the Letter.

It is generally accepted by all Biblical Commentators that this letter was written by James the Lord's brother. He is referred to in the N.T.in.

Matt 13 v 55 *Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Jose's, and Simon, and Judas?*

Mark 6 v 3 *Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Jose's,*

Acts 1 v 14 *These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*

1Cor 15 v 7 *After that, he was seen of James: then of all the apostles.*

Gal 2 v 9 *And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.*

Acts 12 v 17 *Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed and went into another place. Acts 15 the council at Jerusalem* **The Motive for the Letter.**

The letter was written to verse 1 *The twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.* The letter is therefore Trans-Regional; it is also Trans-Cultural, and Trans-World. This letter is to Christians scattered abroad among the Gentiles.

During the persecution of the early Church believers, this hounding was quite severe, especially during the era before Paul's conversion when he wrought havoc amongst the believers. Ac 8:3 *"As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison"*.

James motive for writing this letter relates to several things regarding the Christian life, he wants those committed to the Lord Jesus Christ to understand the importance of expressing their Christian life by the way they live and behave before God, in the Church, and also in the world.

The Christian life can be understood theoretically, but for it to be effective it must be lived practically. The Christian life is only experienced when what has been taught and heard becomes active in a person's life. To live a godly life is more than knowing about it, it is practicing it.

There are some who believe that what James has written is at variance with what Paul wrote. Paul emphasizes in Rom 3:28 *"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law"*. James 2 v 20 *But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?* James 2 v 26 *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

By being well versed in what Paul writes although from his writings we conclude that we are justified without the deeds of the law, he refers in Ephesians.

Eph 2 v 10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

2Tim 3 v 17 *That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* Titus v :7 *In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,*

Titus 2 v 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.*

Titus 3 v 8 *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.* There is therefore no doctrinal incompatibility between James and Paul.

In this Bible study I will be pinpointing certain verses in the first chapter and then link them with other parts of the scripture, some will link with verses in the Epistle of James, whilst others will have an association with the O.T. and some in the N.T.

The extent and coverage of the Epistle is quite clear from the opening verse 1 *“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting”*. I referred to the reason for this scattering earlier when I mentioned Acts 8 v 3 and the persecution during Paul’s pre-conversion days, so there is no need to cover it again.

Wisdom for Godly Living requires a close look at what James says in verse two. I want to say that we won’t be looking into every verse James has written as we only have four Bible Studies in this series, I will major on what I feel are the important issues in our Christian life. So let’s consider the following.

1. Trials are not Easy. Verse 2 *“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers’ temptations”*. Anyone who thinks that trials are easy is living in a fool’s paradise, if we are honest and truthful, about any trial in our Christian life, we will have to admit they are difficult to cope with.

Trials are not sent to destroy us but to strengthen us, the Lord never allows us to pass through any testing to destroy or weaken us. It says in Proverbs 3 v 12 *“For whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights”*.

Heb 12 v 6 *“For whom the LORD loves He chastens and scourges every son whom He receives.”* This is a truth that we never should forget. Remember the Lord does not try you to destroy you but to strengthen you.

In the O.T. we have the instance recorded of the trial Abraham faced when God told him to offer Isaac to Him.

In Gen 22 v 1 & 2 we read *“Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”*

2 Then He said, “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you”

The covenant blessing that God had promised to Abraham was tied into the son of promise which he was now told to offer on the altar and given wholly over to the Lord. Abraham faced up to this trial which must have been extremely hard for him.

The Lord here was testing Abraham’s love and devotion to Him by asking him to offer up his son who was promised to him and Sarah when they were both passed the ability to produce children. It could not have been easy for him, but he faced the trial head on and came through it. Isaac was offered to the Lord, but he was not offered as a dead sacrifice.

Abraham willingly offered his son alive to the Lord, so Isaac was a living sacrifice, the Lord then allowed Abraham to look after what he had offered, so he was to protect and to provide for him, which is what he did. Further.

A study of the future events that occurred in Paul’s life following his conversion show that he endured many trials and difficulties. He was no stranger to hardship for the Lord had warned him through Ananias immediately after his conversion that he would experience many trials. Acts 9 v 16 tells us this *“For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake”*.

In the N.T. we have some amazing words written by him concerning what he endured, 2Cor 4 vs 8 & 9 says *“We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed”*

Then in Phil 1 v 12 he says, *“But I want you to know, brethren that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel”*.

2. Trials are Necessary.

1Peter 1 v 7 *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:*

The N.K.J.V. says.

That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

Trials are essential to see if the faith we have is genuine, if it is genuine, it will stand the test of any trial no matter how severe it is.

Trials are vital for these highlight any areas of weakness we may have in our Christian life. Let's see how some referred to in scripture came through their testing.

In Genesis we read of the trial that Joseph experienced, that lasted several years. The story of his life and the trials he passed through can be read in Genesis chapters 30 to 50. This testing went on during various periods of his life, and in the end, we see that the faith he had was genuine, what he went through tested his faith.

In 1 Samuel 18 through 2Samuel and onto the 1Kings 2 we read the full account of David's life, we read of the trials that he encountered because of the jealousy of King Saul. David experienced many trials after Samuel had anointed him to be King over Israel. It was many years later before he occupied the throne. David's faith was severely tested and was proved to be genuine. We only have to read some of the Psalm he wrote to see how some of the trials of life he encountered. Listen to what he wrote in Psalm 3.

1 LORD, how they have increased who 5 I
Many are they who rise up LORD sustained me.
against me. 6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands

2 Many are they who say of me, "There is
help for him in God." Selah all around.

3 But You, O LORD, are a shield for me,
glory and the One who lifts up my head. You have
LORD with my voice, And He cheekbone; You
holy hill. Selah ungodly.

lay down and slept; I awoke, for the trouble me!

of

no people Who have set themselves against me

my 7 Arise, O LORD; Save me, O my God! For

struck all my enemies on the 4 I cried to the
have broken the teeth of the heard me from His

David passed through every trial even though they were tough and proved he had a genuine faith.

Then we read in the Book of Daniel the story of Daniel and three Hebrews who would not bow down to Nebuchadnezzar golden idol, even though it was a Royal edict, as a result they were all tested, the Hebrews were put into a fiery furnace, came out not even smelling of fire, and Daniel was put into a den of Lions but was released unharmed. Their faith was tested but they had a confident belief that the Lord would see them through the experience. They had a genuine faith.

So, trials are necessary to see if our faith is genuine, if it is we pass the test. Then we have.

3. Trials Refine us.

1 Peter 4 vs 12 to 14 says *“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you.*

13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad about exceeding joy.

14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you”.

Warren Wiersbe in his book ‘Be Mature’ he says, *“God always tests to bring out the best, Satan tempts to bring out the worst”.*

The fiery trails remove any debris we have in our lives. Paul says in 1 Cor 3 vs 13 & 14 *“Each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is.*

14 If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward”.

There are three things fiery trials do.

The first is that they Reveal. The strength of our faith is tested whenever we go through what Paul calls the test of fire, it reveals the true worth of our faith, if our faith stays intact and we have endured the trail, we will be rewarded by the Lord, we will be stamped with the words approved.

The second is that they Remove. When gold is heated to a temperature of 1948 degrees Fahrenheit, or 1064 degrees Celsius it melts, if there are impurities in the gold when it becomes liquid it floats to the surface and is removed. All the debris rises to the top of the ladle. When we go through a fiery trail, it is sent to refine us and never to destroy us. The more debris that is removed from us the more we will show godliness.

The third is that they Restore. When we became Christians and accepted the Lord Jesus into our lives a process of sanctification commenced, this process is one that will continue until we are fully sanctified, Paul refers to it in Colossians 3 v 5 as mortifying our members, which are on earth. Fiery trails destroy those things in our lives that are still offensive to the Lord and gradually restore His image in us.