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## James Introduction: *Background Material*

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*If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength!* Proverbs 24:10

James is a book about the application of our faith and the importance to learn and grow in Christ. That way, we can grow in faith and maturity so we can apply our Christian character and conduct in how we are to others! The primary theme running through James is the knowledge we are given by our Lord. The knowledge we gain from our experiences in life must be rooted in our hearts so it can bubble up into our daily life. That is, the knowledge that is in our heart must transition to how we live our life! At the time, the Jewish sages and many Greek philosophers believed that we are called to gain knowledge for knowledge's sake. To them, its only purpose is that it improves who we are as a person. But, there is no requirement to put any knowledge into practice, and some even taught only a low-life person would practice faith. They sincerely believed knowledge alone was the way to spiritual enlightenment; they were sincerely wrong! James combats this terrible mindset that was starting to come about in his time and that has taken root in many churches today. Our knowledge must change over from our hearts to our hands and feet so it is integrated into our life and church!

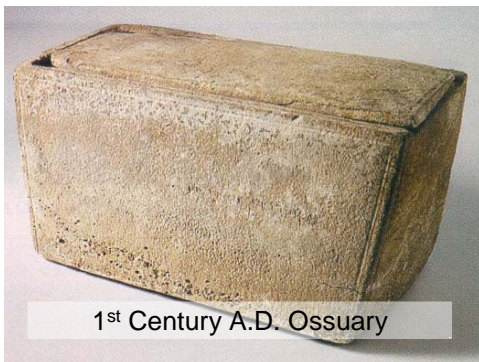
If faith has not changed you over, you will lead a life of problems, without purpose and one of no distinction or betterment to yourself or others. Why? Because, problems are a part of life. At any one time, a problem is headed your way now, you have just gotten out of a problem, or you are headed into a problem. So, we have to know this—problems are coming! Problems are here! The question is not how to avoid them, as most will not be able to—nor should the question to ask be, *why did this happen to me?* Rather, the question needs to be, *how we are going to deal with them?* The Epistle of James is about how “to be” a Christian of faith so we will be able to handle problems and life while being “doers” of our faith. When we are being real with our faith, we will be growing, learning, maturing, and we will be leading a life of excellence to our Lord's glory!

During the time of James, the church was at a crossroads of ending its “honeymoon” period of being ignored by the religious leaders, so they were growing and feeling comfortable and good. They were still a part of Judaism and had not split off from their roots. Now, they are being singled out and picked on. The persecutions were just starting; the two other Jameses in the New Testament had been martyred, Steven had been stoned to death, and many were leaving the faith because of fear. The Church was also starting to deal with the human, sinful nature of gossip, strife, carnality, slander, doctrinal arguments and power plays, so their faith was becoming useless and unproductive—the themes we still have with us today. The self-filled life and the focus on the will of ourselves was overtaking fulfillment in Him and seeking God's Will (John 1:16; 3:30; Eph. 1:23; 3:19; 4:13; Col. 1:19; Col. 1:25). James seeks to write an

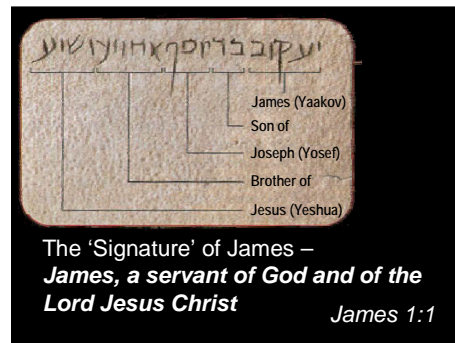
extolment of Christ and an encouragement to the saints to look to Christ in faith and not to their circumstances. Thus, we will then be able to live a righteous life and be a meaningful Christian.

Many of the Apostles had gone far off in their missionary journeys as Jesus called, or had been martyred, so James takes over the lead of the Church base in Jerusalem. Without the New Testament being available yet and the instructions from the Apostles absent, a vacuum of instruction came into the Church. James starts to write his sermons, based on Jesus' teaching, to extol and encourage the Church. He writes like a pastor to point out problems, potential problems as well as sin, and encourage them to really follow Christ by faith and make the changes in their lives so they reflect Christ. Then they will be able to do something with their faith that is worthwhile.

James is a book of unparalleled distinction, with no counterpart in controversy in the early church to the Reformers. It is a book that is unique, as it is not about the life of Jesus as the Gospels are, nor is it a treatise of doctrine such as Paul's letters, nor is it a prophecy as is the Revelation. Rather, it is a "how to" in practical living and encouragement for what lies ahead. It is more like Proverbs than any other New Testament book.



1<sup>st</sup> Century A.D. Ossuary



Perhaps the actual burial box of James. The 'Signature' of James – ***James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ***

**Background Setting:** James is primarily speaking to Jews living in Jerusalem who are starting to face persecution. Given the period; it has only been a decade since Jesus' death and resurrection. The Pharisees had started to persecute the early Christians. They Killed James the brother of John, then Steven, and Paul was on the prowl to destroy the Church (Acts 6-9). The Israelites, of whom most of the Early Church was made up, had a history of difficult circumstances, from greedy fellow Israelites taking advantage of them, to famine, and then to the Romans coming and taking most of the rich people's land away; and then, things

got worse. Many of the new Christians, after having a honeymoon period of the faith and enjoying the freedom from the Law, suddenly scattered because they feared the persecution. Their faith was in circumstances and not really in the substance of our Lord. Many put their faith in the shallow end of the Christianity pool and had not developed the maturity, depth, or character to endure. Because faith was weak, the ways of the flesh sprang up; the gossip, slander, and strife, as well as spiritual warfare, abounded. Thus, James was addressing the social tensions of the time and pointing people to take responsibility for their faith development by seeking Christ and not their circumstances.

Israel was under Roman occupation. The Romans had taken away many of the influential families' land and turned them into "sharecroppers" and into forced poverty. The smaller families with the smaller farms were driven out of business and left destitute. This is the reason Barabbas rose up to seek insurrection (Matt. 27: 15-26). What little land was left in Jewish hands was then taken by Herod the Great, and the people were forced to work the feudal estates and farms. Thus, the culture was angry, poor, devastated, and downtrodden. This caused people to gather in the market places to seek work, wherever and whatever they could get it (Matt. 20:1-16). This created an extreme sense of resentment between the poor and the rich that escalated into forming "Zealot" groups and violence. The rich had guards that would force their will by maiming and killing the poor (Matt. 21:33-46; Acts 21: 30-32), and the poor would rise up in gangs, resorting to rioting and political revolts by desperation. They had no hope—only anger. Since they did not have the money for arms, they lost.

One of the largest revolts occurred in 66AD because of grain shortages and extreme corruption. The people rose up and attacked, and subsequently massacred the priests (many who were wicked and oppressed the poor) and a Roman garrison. Since this happened at the Temple, this led the Romans to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A.D. this was called "The Judean War." The remainder of the Zealots who survived gathered at Masada, Herod's fortress, and held out for three years until they were starved and killed in 73 A.D. Many committed suicide rather than fall into the hands of Romans, including women and children. This was the big news while James' readers were reading this Epistle and perhaps facing a similar fate themselves!

James' Epistle was copied and dispatched to all the known Christian world as a handbook on how to endure persecution, model authentic faith, and be encouraged because *Christ loves you!* It was also a first century sermon resource to pastors!

**Theme:** Right belief equals right behaviors from a Christ-directed and faith-centered life. The theme is that the knowledge of what God puts in our hearts must transmit into our daily lives. The key verse is, "...*faith without works is dead...*" (James 2:14-20). The principle theme is, *real, authentic faith will produce works to glorify our Lord.* Faith, without any actions to prove it, is

worthless and meaningless. Saved? Perhaps. But, what good are you—claiming to be a Christian and not doing anything with your faith!

James is more of a book of sayings than that it is an epistle, (meaning, a *letter*) as it was not addressed or meant to a particular person or group, but it is also a practical discourse of wisdom literature focusing on moral exhortations, just like Proverbs. It is about personal responsibility by aligning one's beliefs to be right so that one's behaviors are right. James uses the Old Testament, especially Psalm 15, as his background, and his exhortations are almost like a commentary to it. James warns and encourages his readers that the sufferings they are experiencing are only the beginning, and it will get worse. But, when our faith is in who Christ is and His work in us, we will have the confidence and perseverance to not only get through our trials, but actually persevere so we will also learn and grow through them! As a result, we will be even better and more mature and then will be able to extol others for the faith. James then switches to practical, "hands on" Christian living—to control our attitudes and tongue, to be listeners, and to stay away from pride and sin. When we do such things, we will be better able to grow in the faith and model the Christian life to others.

James uses illustrations directly for the time and events the people were then facing; he draws from nature and Greek Philosophy. James' main assertions are our relationship of faith and life, and that we must make our Christian life real and meaningful; if not, it is worthless (2:14-26). James speaks to both the rich and the poor (1:9-11; 2:1-9; 4:13-17), to persecutions (1:2-8; 2:6-7; 5:4-6), temptations (1: 2-4; 2:11; 4:2), handling our words (1:19-20,26; 3:1-12; 4:11-12; 5:9), how to seek wisdom (1:5; 3:14-18), developing our faith (1:6-8; 2:14-26), and enduring trials to benefit us (1:9-11; 5:7-11). James' writings were used by the early Church as sermon material, and often read in worship services and gatherings. James was a man who not only taught the way of his Lord, but also lived the life of sincerity with evangelical faith and righteous obedience, a model for us today! This Epistle's destination was for the use, in the church in Jerusalem, as a resource; then it was recopied numerous times and sent as letters to all the known churches there by courier.

**Authorship:** Who was the author of this epistle? Who is this *James*? Most biblical scholars contend it is James the Son of Joseph—the half brother of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—who was fathered from Joseph and Mary, whereas Jesus, His humanity, was fathered from God and Mary. The Epistle does not give us the details of who James is; we have to research through the writings of the Early Church Fathers as well as archeology, Church tradition, and textual criticism. We know he was prominent and well known. The only prominent and well known James we know of from the above areas of research is James, the half brother of Jesus (Psalm 69:8; Matt. 13:55-56, Mark 6:3, Luke 24:10, John 7:5; Acts 12:17; 15:13-21; 21:17-26; 1 Cor. 15:7; Gal. 1:18-19; 2:9,12). There are four other Jameses in the New Testament, including the brother of John referred by the Early Church Fathers as James the Less (Matt. 4:21; 10:2;

Mark 15:40). This was James, the son of Zebedee, who was the brother of John (Matt. 4: 21-22). He was also a fisherman, and was a partner with Peter (Luke 5:10). He and his brother John (the writer of the Gospel of John, three Epistles, and the Revelation—John 21:20-24), were called the *Sons of Thunder*, perhaps because of the “hot” temperament of their father, or of themselves, as supported in Luke 9: 52-54. This James was the first of the Apostles to be martyred in 44 A.D. (Acts 12:1-2). It is rumored that he preached in India and Spain before Herod had him beheaded (Acts 12:1-2). There was also another Disciple named James—James, the son of Alphaeus, who was also referred to as, *James the Less*. Other than in the lists of apostles, little is known of him. He is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. The Jews later stoned him. However, the James who wrote the epistle was also the main spokesperson for the Jerusalem church, first as an elder, and then as its leader (Acts 12: 17; 15:13-23; 21:17-19; Gal. 2:9-12). The brother of John and the other James were conceivably already martyred by this time.

James, the half brother of Jesus, was curious and yet skeptical of Jesus until His resurrection when he was convinced and then converted (Mark 6:3; John 7:5; 1 Cor. 15:5-7). It is assumed he was married (1 Cor. 9:5) and he was not among the original twelve or perhaps only followed occasionally (Matt. 10:1-4). He was probably there at Jesus’ last days, helping prepare the Passover due to cultural customs, and was there at Pentecost (Matthew 26:17; Acts 1:12-14). The Early Church Fathers call him “James the Just,” telling us of his extraordinary godliness, integrity, and righteousness. He had a reputation for zeal and prayer and was most known for his obedience. His nickname was “Camel Knees” because of his constant prayer and the calluses on his knees because of it. Remember, Jesus was his half brother; how many obedient younger half brothers have you met? Eusebius and Hegesippus tell us James was beaten to death with clubs and then thrown down the Temple parapet after witnessing his faith to the religious leaders and Pharisees (Matt. 23). He is credited for saying the same words of his Brother, *Father, forgive them for they know not what they do!* There are no other known men called “James” who would qualify—by being alive and by being leaders—who could have written this Epistle.

Objections to James, the half brother of Jesus, as the author? The Epistle suggests a higher learning and grammatical structure that he may have had access to. James, the half brother of Jesus, was uneducated. But, is this true? I have no idea how the idea that the disciples were uneducated and illiterate men came about. In fact, the disciples had the equivalent of a college education, as they attended school and were able to read and write well. They did not have the further formal education that the Scribes and Pharisees had, which was equivalent to a Ph.D. of today. That is the reason the Pharisees looked down at them—because they did not have “their” education and title, and they were not under the care of another Rabbi (that they approved of)—not because they were uneducated (Mark 6:2-3; 11:27-28; John 7:14). But, modern research now suggests that Ezra indeed did set up schools and most of the population, as in

ours today in the U.S., were educated to read and write; in addition, they were taught to know the Torah. The Romans also set up schools where people learned to read and write Greek, then, forced it as the official language. The objections the Religious leaders gave concerning that the Disciples were uneducated is not that they did not know how to read and write, but rather that they did not go to “their” schools! This was a snob approach, such as saying *hey you did not go to Harvard? Then you are uneducated!* Thus, James and all of the Disciples were more than capable to write such a letter and or had access to “Amanuenses” (secretaries). Paul, the most educated of all of the Disciples, dictated his letters, as did the very educated Josephus. James, being a carpenter, would have access to even higher education that was necessary for such a profession then. Galilee was not the backwards dump as many commentators have espoused, and its near by city of Capernaum was, in fact, a metropolis; it was a large, industrious city which would also have afforded many other educational opportunities. Thus, James certainty could have written it or dictated it.

The further proof of is that the Early Church Fathers credited it to him. Origen (185-253AD), Eusebius (265-340), and Jerome (340-420) all state, without a doubt, that James, the half brother of Jesus, wrote this epistle. Also, the textual criticism (examining the recorded speech pattern from the grammar and vocabulary in the writings of Acts 15:13-29) to the Epistle clearly shows author agreement.

**Date:** Most conservative scholars give the date at about 44 to 50 A.D. and 60 A.D. at the very latest; this is from the use of language and its colloquialisms, structure, describing of events prior to the destruction of the Temple as recorded in Acts 12, and before the events in Acts 15. James himself was martyred in 62 A.D. by the high priest Ananus II, of which Josephus and Eusebius record. The most logical date is 49 A.D., making this one of the first, if not the first New Testament writing. The Early Church was just starting to be persecuted and James’ purpose was to prepare the people for such further travesties and sufferings that will come but that have not come yet. Also, the great “Judaizer” controversy is not mentioned or the debate of circumcision that came after 50A.D. James’ pattern of writing is more like Proverbs and does not fit the genre style of the Gospels and other Epistles that set the later tone. James uses the Greek word for *synagogue* as the “meeting of worship” and not “church,” thus indicating that the Christians have not spit off from the Jews yet, which also happened after 50 A.D. In 66 A.D., the war with Rome erupted, leading to the destruction of the Temple. Such events would have been recorded. The liberal argument that it was written a generation or generations later just does not hold up to textual evidence or use of rhetoric. James’ use of rhetoric was in line with local and historical customs and use, and such rhetoric would be difficult, if not impossible, to replicate a few centuries later, as some liberal scholars have contended. It is possible that James was a collation of his sermons put together by a scribe later in time. If so, this does not take away from the actual veracity or the date and

author. The only difference would be when it was edited and distributed, and this still would be prior to 70 A.D.

**Destination:** How James addresses the letter, and that the Gentiles are not mentioned, (as they come into the Church after 50 A.D.) are also strong indications for an early date (Acts 8:1). Thus, at this time, this letter was written to a church that was primarily Jewish, *to the twelve tribes* (1:1). Also, the mention of *assembly* or *meeting* in the Greek (2:2) refers to a synagogue. Furthermore, James uses the Hebrew term *Lord Almighty* or *Lord of the Sabbath* (5:4) meaning “Lord of Hosts.” Thus, the letter was intended for the first Christians who were mostly, if not, all Jews. Fear not, if you are not a Jew, because the rest of us have been grafted in; thus, this letter is for you, too (Rom. 11:17-21)!

**Canonicity:** In contrast to Matthew, that was the darling of the Church without controversy or argument, James was the most contested Epistle of the New Testament, barely making it in the canon. This letter was not fully embraced by the Early Church as Scripture. Many only took it as a set of new proverbs; since it was not from an apostle, it was not theological enough and did not contain a significant amount of direct quotations from Jesus, so they saw it as a mere commentary that was profitable but not canonical. The authority was not in question, nor was fault found in it as with other Gospels that were not included such as 1 Clement. However, it was not used much in the Church. Just as today, people did not like to be convicted, and James is a book about convictions! People discredited it, but as time went on, it gained more acceptance. Eusebius and Jerome put their stamp of approval on it; finally, in 397 A.D., at the Council of Carthage, James was recognized as authoritative. Ironically, it may have been the first written, yet the last approved! What swayed them? They realized that James contains the very words and very thoughts of our Lord. See the outline below!

**Theological Value:** The lack of theological value does not take away from the importance, as James contains the application of theology. It is far more valuable to do what Jesus says than just believe and not do! Ironically, James does contain a lot of theological value apart from *faith without works is dead*. It has a good presence of the doctrines of God, as in His generosity, holiness, unchanging, goodness, sovereignty, justice, mercy, and His concern for us (1:5, 17; 2:19; 3:9; 4:15; 5:11). James also gives us a Doctrine of Sin, its indwelling of all humanity, giving of death, its anger, it is filthy, it blasphemes, it is prejudiced, bitter, lustful, its universality, evil, pride, and its oppression (1:14-15, 20-21; 2:7, 9-11; 3:2; 4:1-4, 6; 5:4). Even though the Church was not formed yet, James gives a glimpse of Eschatology (end times)—the end of the Church; we will be rewarded, our hope is eternity, God’s Kingdom is coming, Judgment will come, and Jesus will return (1:12; 2:5, 12; 3:1; 5:7-8). Also, Jesus is called God (1:1; 2:1), we are regenerated (1:18), salvation is from Christ alone (1:21), faith that is real will show fruit (2:14-26), justification is by faith alone (2:21-25), and our sins will be forgiven (5:15). James, indeed, is a book of theological value and eminence!

The great Reformer Martin Luther called this a “Strawy” Epistle (meaning made of feeble straw that does not hold up),” because he thought it contradicted the rest of the veracity of Scripture, especially of Paul and the Romans. However, with all due respect to one of the Reformation’s great heroes, he got this one wrong. James does not contradict Paul; in fact, they complement and dovetail nicely into each other (Rom. 5:1-5 vs. James 1:2-8). Luther should have saw that James enlightens us further to put more action to our faith. Luther was concerned about how we become a Christian and James was concerned how to act like one, so they are like two ships that missed each other in the night. However, there is no contradiction, because all three, Luther, Paul, and James would wholeheartedly agree that real faith produces real works. James is not about salvation; it is about holiness, as in living as a Christian. While other critics of James said he was about legalism, this, too, is not true. We are not forced to comply to the precepts of James or Paul; rather, because we know God loves us, we should be grateful and strive to live a purpose filled life. And, Paul encourages and extols us to holy living as, of course, our Lord does in the Gospels.

**Genre:** The type of literature is a Greek essay for exhortation called “Parenesis.” It is literally a series of short exhortation sermons. James is a book of exhortation that is intended to persuade, incite, advise, counsel, and rebuke us while encouraging us to be responsible with our faith. James is calling Christians to take their faith seriously and not recklessly.

James is perhaps based as a commentary from Psalm 15, and incorporates Classic Jewish wisdom, some Greek stoic philosophy, Greek rhetorical insights (indicating his higher education level) and some of his Bothers teachings (Matthew chapters 5-7). It is possible these were sermons and writings (proverbs) from James that were collected and turned into this Epistle after his death, but this is speculation. It is more probable that this is a single, polished work from James to encourage and extol the Early Church and prepare them for the coming persecutions. This is referred to as a “letter-essay.” Epistles, such as this and of Paul’s, were copied and delivered by messengers who also gave the introductions, further explanations, purpose, and updated happenings. However, textual research clearly shows that this Epistle is polished and unified and is perhaps a single work by James that he drew from his own previous material like any author does today. Keep in mind that paper and ink were some of the most expensive possessions and the cost would amount to several months of salary! That is why they are short and to the point! Remember, God uses the personality, culture, and words of the writer to convey His most precious, inerrant Word!





The Masada

**Outline** (James draws principally from Psalm 15 and Matthew, chapters 5 through 7)

**Chapter 1:** How do we react to pressure? Faith will not break when it is real, even when times are dire. We are stable because who we are in Christ and not because of our circumstances.

I. Trials are a part of life.

1:1 Greetings

1:2-4 Seeking Jesus to deal with problems! We can declare them joy (Matt. 5:11-12; Luke 6:22-23)

1:5 Seeking wisdom to deal with life; receiving from God (Matt. 7:7; Luke 11:19)

1: 6--8! Asking for faith and not doubting (Matt. 21:-22; Mark 11:22-24)

II. Temptations will come.

1: 9-11 Humbleness, and seeking the proper perspective on life (Matt. 13:6; 23:12; Mark 4:7; Luke 14:11; 18:14)

III. How will you handle trials and guard against impurity?

1:12 Importance of perseverance (Matt. 5:11-12)

1:13-18 Holding on to the goodness of God (Matt. 7:12; 19:16; Luke 6:27, 35)

IV. We have to be doers of the Word, not just hearers.

1:19-20 The importance of listening (Matt. 7:11; Luke 6:46-49).

1:21-27 Our call to be compassionate toward those who hurt (Matt. 25:34-36)

**Chapter 2:** When Faith is authentic, it will show it in our lives. We will have real, dependable love that transitions into respect for God, for others, and for ourselves!

I. Favoritism and prejudices.

2:1-4 Paying attention to what is important (Luke 12:21)

2:5 The poor will inherit the earth (Matt. 5:5; Luke 6:20)

II. Apathy and wrong mindsets.

2:6-9 Love your neighbor as your self (Matt. 22:39; Mark 12:30-31)

2: 10-12 Do not break the commandments (Matt. 5:19)

2:13 Mercy triumphs over Judgment (Prov. 21:13)

2:14-26

III. Obedience and action are the proofs of faith.

2: 11-13 Faith without works is meaningless (Matt. 18:23-34; 25:41-46)

2:14-26 We show our friendship with God by our obedience (Matt. 7:21-23, 26; 21:28-32; John 15:13-15)

**Chapter 3:** When our faith is real, we will show control and humility. We will have constructive ways of being encouraging by our communication!

I. How we use our words reflects what is in our soul.

3:1 Teachers are more responsible (Mark 9:38-40; Luke 20:45-47)

3:2 We are judged by our words (Matt. 12:37)

3:3-6 Real corruption comes from our mouth (Matt. 15:11, 18; Mark 7:15,20; Luke 6:45)

3:7-12 We cannot do both good and evil together (Matt. 7:16-20; Luke 6:43-44)

II. How we express our attitude shows how real our faith is.

3:13-15 Bitterness and envy destroy relationships and opportunities (Prov. 13:30; 27:4)

3: 16-18 Blessed are the peacemakers (Matt. 5:9)

**Chapter 4:** When faith is working, we will be expressing patience. We will be able to handle conflict and strife and resolve the tough issues of life!

I. How we control our desires shows whether we want God's will or ours.

4:1-3 Desires will consume us (Matt. 4:39)

4:4 Spiritual adultery (Mark 8:38)

4:5 Friendship with the world means being enemies of God (John 15 18-21)

II. Pride destroys

4:6 God hates pride and loves humility (Psalm 49; Luke 14:11)

III. Humility shows our devotion

4:7 Flee from the devil (Matt. 12:26-28)

4:8 Submit to God (Matt. 26:39)

- 4:9 Laughter turns into mourning (Matt. 5:4; Luke 6:25)
- 4:10 God is the One to lift us up (Matt. 12:17-20; Luke 3:16)

IV. We have no right to judge

- 4:11 Do not slander (Matt. 7:1-2)
- 4:12 Only God has the right to judge (Matt. 10:28)
- 4:13-16 Do not plan ahead without God (Luke 12:18-20)
- 4:17 We sin when we know God's will but do not do it (Luke 12:47-48)

**Chapter 5:** When we are patient, we are persevering. We will have confidence and hope in life whatever we face because who we are in Christ.

I. How we handle our money shows our devotion and what matters to us.

- 5:1 Woes to the rich and to corruption (Luke 6:24)
- 5:2-4 Wealth in time is all worthless (Matt. 6:19-20)
- 5:5-6 Self indulgence is sin and is of no benefit (Luke 16:19-20, 25)

II. Patience perseveres our faith.

- 5:7 Be patient (Luke 18:1-8)
- 5: 8-9 Watch because Jesus will return (Matt. 24:33; Mark 13:35-39)
- 5:10 The Prophets are our example (Matt. 5:10-12)

III. We are called to act with kindness to others.

- 5:11 God is kind to us (Psalm 94:12; Job 1:21-22)
- 5:12 Do not swear oaths (Matt. 5:33-37)
- 5:13-14 Meeting needs of others (Psalm 50:14-15)
- 5:15-18 Power of prayer (Matt. 6:6-8; Luke 11:2-4)

IV. Our call to care and bring back those who stray from the faith.

- 5:19-21 Our call to help restore the stray sheep (Matt. 18:15)

The final thought about James? Our short-term setbacks will produce long-term results that glorify our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

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