

# James Chapter 1 Verses 1-8

*NKJV Notes by Pastor Mike Sasso*

## Introduction

This book is possibly the earliest of the New Testament's letters written. The letter addresses a company of Jewish believers around 45-48 AD. The author is James "the Lord's brother", so the content of this letter should be very valuable to today's church. "Faith" is the running theme. But James describes a faith that goes beyond "saving faith". He lays out for us in this letter what a true Christian's "living faith" should look like. As we explore this letter together, we will better understand the everyday, practical side of the Christian faith.

## Count it All Joy!

### STUDY NOTES: verses 18-23

**v. 1 James** - Since James is the actual "half-brother" of Jesus, it was very difficult for him to believe in Jesus as the Messiah at first. See John 7:1-5. James became a true believer after Jesus resurrection. See 1Cor 15:3-7. Christ's resurrection was and is the central theme and proof of the Christian faith. Rom 1:3-4, 1Cor 15:1-4. After the resurrection James' faith became so "rock solid" that he became head of the Jerusalem church and was eventually martyred for his faith in 62 AD. He was stoned and beaten to death with rods. According to tradition, his last words were, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

**Bondservant** – "doulos". Lit. A slave. One who gives himself up to another's will. What is very interesting is, notice, whom James claims to be a bondservant of...

**God AND the Lord Jesus Christ!** - James must have gone through quite a transformation having once been a doubter and now calling himself Jesus "bondservant"! Not only that, but James calls his own brother "Lord".

**Lord** – The Greek word "kurios" means supreme master and owner. This same word is used in reference to God himself! See Matt 22:37. Calling himself a slave to God and the "Lord" Jesus Christ strongly hints at Christ's deity.

**Christ** – The long awaited Jewish Messiah. Deut. 18:15-19, Is 53.

**To the twelve tribes** – The "twelve tribes of Israel", descended from the 12 sons of Jacob. (See Gen. 49:1-28) Because of persecution, the Jewish brethren were scattered around the known world. As head of the Jerusalem church, James' heart was to write to his dear Jewish brothers.

**Greetings** – This word in the Greek literally means, "rejoice and be glad"!

**v.2 Brethren, Joy, trials** - There are many seeming paradoxes in the Christian faith. Here is one such paradox. Because we are in the body of Christ "trials" have become a tool in God's hand to fashion us into what he wants us to be. This makes "trials" a good thing and something to rejoice about. We may not be able to be happy about the pain or suffering we are personally experiencing. But we can always be assured that God is using it for good somehow. (Rom 8:28) In this we can rejoice.

**v. 3-4** James now gets specific about exactly what the benefits of trials are... **"Patience"** (the ability to endure under pressure) & **"Perfection"** (God's finished product) See 1Peter 5:10 & Col 1:21-23.

**v. 5-8 Ask for WISDOM** - Many preachers today would advise you to "take authority over" or ask for "deliverance" from your trials. But since we know that trials are good for us, the best thing we could ask for is wisdom rather than an easy way out.

**Who gives to all liberally without reproach** - It may not always be God's will to immediately deliver us out of our trial. But we know it is always God's will to give us wisdom in the midst of our trial. Remember that God's desire is to give us patience and endurance in order to make us perfect. Suffering is one of God's tools. 1Peter 2:20-21

**Ask in faith without doubting** – It seems that God honors faith. (Heb 11:6) Doubting God's word in the garden got man in the mess he is in. Apparently God now has made a way back to him through believing and trusting him again.

**He who doubts is like the waves of the sea, tossed by the wind (V:6)** - A double minded man, unstable in all his ways (V:8)– Can you relate? Have you ever gone through a crisis of faith? Have you ever doubted God? If you have, then you know exactly what James is talking about.

**v.7** You obviously can't receive "wisdom" from God when your head is filled with doubts and confusion.

**v. 8 Double-minded** means wavering, uncertain, doubting. It can also mean, "Divided in interest" or "having two minds". Double-mindedness can cripple a Christian's walk.

### **TRUTH SUMMARY:**

As Christians, we really need to change our attitudes about many things in life. One of these things is "trials". Once we understand that God's primary plan for us after we get saved is to make us like Jesus, (Rom 8:28-29, 2Cor 3:18) we can be more accepting of trials, knowing that God is using trials to change our character. God is more concerned about our character than our comfort. Think of it like a doctor operating on a patient. Pain must be first inflicted before the patient can find true healing.

### **TRUTH APPLIED:**

1. What does today's text teach us about Jesus Christ?

2. According to this text why should we rejoice when we find ourselves in a trial? Can you think of a personal example of this in your life? (i.e. Rom. 8:28)
  
3. There are 5 commands in today's text. See if you can find all five. As you do, identify which commands you feel you fall short of obeying. Make it a matter of group prayer and confession to God that he would empower you to change.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

We know that faith is a foundation of the Christian life. (1Cor. 13:13 ) Faith is trusting God at his word. But James shows us the importance of living by faith in our everyday life. We need faith in order to take the right attitudes in life (V:2). We need faith to believe that God hears and answers our prayers (V:6-8). May you continue to grow in faith as you study God's Word! (Rom 10:17)

Leaning on Him,  
*Mike Sasso*