English: Condensed Translation Notes for James

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## Chapter 1

#### James 1:1

##### James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ

"This letter is from James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ"

##### to the twelve tribes

"to God's faithful people"

##### in the dispersion

"who are scattered around the world"

#### James 1:2

##### Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you experience various troubles

"My fellow believers, think of all your different kinds of troubles as things to celebrate"

#### James 1:3

##### the testing of your faith produces endurance

"when you suffer hardships, God is finding out how much you trust him. As a result, you will become able to endure even more hardships"

#### James 1:4

##### Let endurance complete its work

"Learn to endure any hardship"

##### fully developed

able to trust in Christ and obey him in all circumstances

##### not lacking anything

"having all that you need"

#### James 1:5

##### ask for it from God, the one who gives generously and without rebuke to all

"ask God for it. He is the one who gives generously and does not rebuke any"

##### he will give it to him

"God will give it to him"

#### James 1:6

##### in faith, doubting nothing

"with complete certainty that God will answer"

##### For anyone who doubts is like a wave in the sea that is driven by the wind and tossed around

Anyone who doubts that God will help him is said to be like the water in the ocean or in a large lake, which keeps moving in different directions.

#### James 1:8

##### is a double-minded man, unstable

"cannot decide if he will follow Jesus or not and is unstable"

#### James 1:9

##### the lowly brother

"the believer whom other people consider unimportant"

##### boast of his high position

Someone whom God has honored is spoken of as if he were standing in a high place.

#### James 1:10

##### but the rich man of his low position

"but let the man who has lots of money boast of his low position"

#### James 1:11

##### its beauty perishes

"it is no longer beautiful"

##### the rich man will fade away in the middle of his journey

As flowers do not die suddenly but instead fade away over a short time, so also the rich people may not die suddenly but instead take a little time to disappear. He also has not given any thought to his coming death, and that it takes him by surprise.

#### James 1:12

##### Blessed is the man who endures testing

"The man who endures testing is fortunate"

##### endures testing

remains faithful to God during hardships

##### passed the test

he has been approved by God

##### receive the crown of life

"receive eternal life as his reward"

##### has been promised to those who love God

"God has promised to those who love him"

#### James 1:13

##### when he is tempted

"when he desires to do something evil"

##### I am tempted by God

"God is trying to make me do something evil"

##### God is not tempted by evil nor does he himself tempt anyone

"No one can make God desire to do evil and God himself does not try to persuade anyone to do evil"

#### James 1:14

##### each person is tempted by his own desire

A person's evil desire is spoken of as if it were someone else who was tempting him to sin and who could drag him away.

##### entices

attracts, persuades someone to do evil

#### James 1:15

##### Then after the desire conceives, it gives birth to sin, and ... is full grown, it gives birth to death

This is a picture of someone who ends up dying both spiritually and physically.

#### James 1:16

##### Do not be deceived

"Do not let anyone deceive you"

#### James 1:17

##### Every good gift and every perfect gift

James uses these phrases to emphasize that anything good that a person has comes from God.

##### the Father of lights

God, the creator of all the lights in the sky (sun, moon, and stars), is said to be their "Father."

##### With him there is no changing or shadow because of turning

"God always stays the same. He does not change like shifting shadows"

#### James 1:18

##### to give us

The word "us" refers to James and his audience.

##### give us birth

God, who brought us eternal life, is spoken of as if he had given us birth.

##### the word of truth

"the message about the truth" or "the true message."

##### so that we would be a kind of firstfruits

"so that we would be like an offering of firstfruits"

#### James 1:19

##### You know this

Possible meanings are 1) "Know this" is a command to pay attention to what I am about to write or 2) "You know this" is a statement saying that I am about to remind you of something that you already know.

##### Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak

These sayings mean people should first listen intently, and then consider carefully what they say.

##### slow to anger

"not get angry quickly"

#### James 1:21

##### take off all sinful filth and abundant amounts of evil

"stop doing all filthy sins and stop doing every kind of sinful behavior"

##### sinful filth

Here "filth," that is, dirt, stands for sin and evil.

##### In humility

"Without pride"

##### receive the implanted word

"obey the message God has spoken to you"

##### save your souls

"save yourselves from God's judgment"

#### James 1:22

##### Be doers of the word

"Be people who follow God's instructions"

##### deceiving yourselves

"fooling yourselves"

#### James 1:23

##### For if anyone is a hearer of the word but not a doer

"For if anyone listens to God's message in the scriptures but does not obey the word"

##### he is like a man who examines his natural face in a mirror

A person who hears God's word is like someone who looks at his face in the mirror.

#### James 1:24

##### then goes away and immediately forgets what he was like

"then goes away and immediately forgets to do what he saw he needed to do"

#### James 1:25

##### the person who looks carefully into the perfect law

This expression continues the image of the law as a mirror.

##### the perfect law of freedom

"the perfect law that makes those who follow it free"

##### this man will be blessed in his actions

"God will bless this man as he obeys the law"

#### James 1:26

##### thinks he is religious

"thinks he worships God correctly"

##### his tongue

"what he says"

##### his heart

"himself"

##### his religion is worthless

"he worships God uselessly"

#### James 1:27

##### pure and unspoiled before our God and Father

"completely acceptable to our God and Father"

##### the fatherless

"the orphans"

##### in their affliction

The fatherless and widows are suffering because their fathers or husbands have died.

##### to keep oneself unstained by the world

"to not allow the evil in the world to cause oneself to sin"

## Chapter 2

#### James 2:1

##### My brothers

"My fellow believers" or "My brothers and sisters in Christ"

##### do not hold to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ ... with partiality toward certain people

"as you hold to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ ... do not show partiality toward certain people"

##### hold to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ

Believing in Jesus Christ is spoken of as if it were an object that one could hold onto.

##### partiality

the act of treating some people better than others

#### James 2:2

##### Suppose that someone enters your meeting

James describes a situation where the believers might give more honor to a rich person than to a poor person.

##### wearing gold rings and splendid clothes

"dressed like a wealthy person"

#### James 2:3

##### sit here in a good place

sit in this place of honor

##### stand over there

move to a place with less honor

##### Sit by my footstool

Move to a humble place

#### James 2:4

##### are you not judging among yourselves? Have you not become judges with evil thoughts?

"you are making judgments among yourselves and becoming judges with evil thoughts."

#### James 2:5

##### Listen, my beloved brothers

"Pay attention, my dear fellow believers"

##### did not God choose ... love him?

"God has chosen ... love him"

##### the poor

"poor people"

##### be rich in faith

"have strong faith in Christ"

##### heirs

The people to whom God has made promises are spoken of as if they were to inherit property and wealth from a family member.

#### James 2:6

##### But you have

James is speaking to his whole audience.

##### have dishonored the poor

"you have shamed poor people"

##### Is it not the rich who oppress you?

"It is rich people who treat you badly.”

##### Are they not the ones ... to court?

"The rich people are the ones who forcibly take you to court to accuse you in front of judges"

#### James 2:7

##### Do they not insult ... have been called?

"The rich people insult ... have been called."

##### the good name by which you have been called

"Christ, who called you" or "Christ, to whom you belong"

#### James 2:8

##### you fulfill

The word "you" refers to the Jewish believers.

##### fulfill the royal law

"obey God's law."

##### Love your neighbor as yourself

James is quoting from Leviticus 19:18.

##### your neighbor

"all people" or "everyone"

##### you do well

"you are doing well"

#### James 2:9

##### if you favor

"give special treatment to" or "give honor to"

##### committing sin

"sinning" That is, breaking the law.

##### you are convicted by the law as transgressors

"the law itself convicts you of transgressing it" or "you are guilty of breaking God's law"

#### James 2:10

##### For whoever obeys

"For anyone who obeys"

##### except that he stumbles ... the whole law

Disobeying one point of the law is spoken of as if it were stumbling while walking.

##### in just a single way

because of disobedience to just one requirement of the law.

#### James 2:11

##### For the one who said

This refers to God, who gave the law to Moses.

##### Do not commit

To "commit" is to do an action.

##### If you ... but if you ... you have

Here "you" means "each one of you."

#### James 2:12

##### So speak and act

"So you must speak and obey."

##### who will be judged by means of the law of freedom

"who know that God will judge them by means of the law that gives true freedom"

#### James 2:13

##### Mercy triumphs over

"Mercy defeats"

#### James 2:14

##### What profit is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith, but he has no works?

"Fellow believers, if someone says he has faith but he has no works, that does him no good at all." or "Fellow believers, someone who has no works is no better if he says he has faith than someone who does not say he has faith."

##### he has faith, but he has no works ... that faith

"he believes in God but does not do anything as a result of his belief ... that belief"

##### Can that faith save him?

"Just saying he believes in God will not save him."

#### James 2:15

##### brother or sister

a fellow believer in Christ, whether male or female

#### James 2:16

##### stay warm

"have enough clothes to wear" or "have a place to sleep"

##### be filled

"have enough to eat"

##### for the body

to eat, to wear, and to live comfortably

##### what profit is that?

"how does that help them?" or "your speech by itself does not help them."

#### James 2:17

##### faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead

"a person who says he believes in God but does not do anything as a result of his belief, does not really believe in God"

#### James 2:18

##### "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by my works

"'You believe in God, and I do good things.' Prove to me that you can believe in God without doing anything, and I will prove to you that I believe in God by what I do"

#### James 2:20

##### Do you want to know, foolish man, that faith without works is useless?

"Listen to me, foolish man, and I will show that faith without works is useless."

##### that faith without works is useless

"that saying that you believe in God without doing good things is useless"

#### James 2:21

##### Was not Abraham our father justified by works ... on the altar?

"Did not God justify Abraham our father because of what he did ... on the altar?" or "God certainly justified Abraham our father because of what he did ... on the altar."

##### father

"ancestor."

#### James 2:22

##### You see

"You understand"

##### that faith worked with his works, and that by works his faith was completed

"that because Abraham believed God, he did what God commanded him to do. And Abraham doing what God commanded showed that he truly believed"

#### James 2:23

##### The scripture was fulfilled

"This fulfilled the scripture". See Genesis 15:6.

##### it was counted to him as righteousness

"God regarded his faith as righteousness."

#### James 2:24

##### it is by works that a man is justified, and not only by faith

"God justifies a man because of what he does as a result of his belief, and not just because he believes in God"

#### James 2:25

##### In the same way also ... justified by works

James says that what was true of Abraham was also true of Rahab. Both were justified by works.

##### was not Rahab the prostitute justified by works ... another road?

"God justified Rahab the prostitute because of what she did ... another road."

##### messengers

people who bring news from another place

##### sent them away by another road

"then helped them escape and leave the city"

#### James 2:26

##### For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead

"For just as the body is useless without the spirit, even so it is useless for a person to believe in God if he does not do anything as a result of his belief"

## Chapter 3

#### James 3:1

##### my brothers

"my fellow believers"

##### we who teach will be judged more strictly

"God will judge us who teach more severely."

##### we who teach

Here James includes himself and other teachers, but not the readers.

#### James 3:2

##### we all stumble

James speaks of himself, other teachers, and the readers, so the word "we" is inclusive.

##### does not stumble in words

"does not sin by saying wrong things"

##### he is a perfect man

"he is spiritually mature"

##### control even his whole body

"control all his behavior"

#### James 3:3

##### Now if we put bits into horses' mouths

A bit is a small piece of metal that is placed into a horse's mouth to control where it goes.

#### James 3:4

##### Notice also that ships ... are driven by strong winds, are steered by a very small rudder

A rudder or tool is a flat piece of wood or metal at the back of the ship, used to control where it goes.

##### are steered by a very small rudder to wherever the pilot desires

"have a small tool that a person can use to control where the ship goes"

#### James 3:5

##### the tongue is a small member

"the tongue is a small part of the body"

##### Notice also

"Think about"

##### how small a fire sets on fire a large forest

"how a small flame can start a fire that burns many trees"

#### James 3:6

##### The tongue is also a fire

"The tongue is like a fire"

##### a world of evil set among our members

The enormous effects of sinful speaking are spoken of as if they were a world by themselves.

##### our members

"the parts of our bodies"

##### The tongue defiles the whole body

"For God rejects a person who speaks evil words"

##### sets on fire the course of life

"it ruins a person's entire life"

##### life, and is itself set on fire by hell

"life because the devil uses it for evil"

#### James 3:7

##### For every kind of ... mankind

"People have learned to control many kinds of wild animals, birds, reptiles, and sea creatures"

##### reptile

This is an animal that crawls on the ground.

#### James 3:8

##### But no human being can tame the tongue

James speaks of the tongue as if it were a wild animal.

##### It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison

"It is like a restless and evil creature that can kill people with its venom"

#### James 3:9

##### With it we

"We use the tongue to say words that"

##### we curse men

"we ask God to harm men"

##### who have been made in God's likeness

"whom God made in his likeness"

#### James 3:10

##### Out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing

"With the same mouth, a person blesses people and curses people"

##### My brothers

"Fellow Christians"

##### these things should not happen

"these things are wrong"

#### James 3:11

##### Does a spring pour out from its opening both sweet and bitter water?

"You know that a spring does not pour out both sweet water and bitter water"

#### James 3:12

##### Does a fig tree, my brothers, make olives?

"Brothers, you know that a fig tree cannot grow olives."

##### Or a grapevine, figs?

"Or does a grapevine make figs?"

#### James 3:13

##### Who is wise and understanding among you?

"I will tell you how a wise and understanding person is to act."

##### Let that person show a good life by his works in the humility of wisdom

"That person should live a good life by doing the kind of deeds that come from being humble and wise"

#### James 3:14

##### if you have bitter jealousy and ambition in your heart

"if you are jealous and selfish"

##### do not boast and lie against the truth

"do not boast that you are wise, because that is not true"

#### James 3:15

##### This is not the wisdom that comes down from above

"This is not the kind of wisdom that God teaches us from heaven"

##### This is not the wisdom that comes down from above. Rather, it is earthly, unspiritual, demonic

"Whoever acts like this is not honoring to what God in heaven teaches us. Rather, this person is earthly, not spiritual, and from demons"

#### James 3:16

##### For where there are jealousy and ambition, there is confusion and every evil practice

"For when people are jealous and selfish, this causes them to act in disorderly and evil ways"

##### there is confusion

"there is disorder" or "there is chaos"

##### every evil practice

"every kind of sinful behavior"

#### James 3:17

##### But the wisdom from above is first pure

"But when a person is wise according to what God in heaven teaches, he acts in ways that are first holy"

##### full of mercy and good fruits

"full of mercy and good deeds"

##### and sincere

"and honest" or "and truthful"

#### James 3:18

##### The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace among those who make peace

"The result of making peace is righteousness"

##### make peace

"cause people to live peacefully"

## Chapter 4

#### James 4:1

##### Where do quarrels and disputes among you come from?

"Why do you quarrel and dispute among yourselves?"

##### Do they not come from your desires that fight among your members?

"Do they not come because of the conflict you feel within you because of your different desires" or "You quarrel and argue because of the tension caused by your different desires"

#### James 4:2

##### You murder and covet, and you are not able to obtain

"You do all kinds of evil things to get what you cannot have"

##### You fight and quarrel

"You constantly fight"

#### James 4:3

##### you ask wrongly

"you ask with wrong motives" or "you ask with bad attitudes"

#### James 4:4

##### You adulteresses!

"You are not being faithful to God!"

##### Do you not know ... God?

"You know ... God!"

##### friendship with the world

Here the world's value system is spoken of as if it were a person that others could be friends with.

##### friendship with the world is hostility against God

"friends of the world are enemies of God"

#### James 4:5

##### Or do you think the scripture says in vain ... envious"?

"There is a reason that scripture says ... envious".

##### The Spirit he caused to live in us

Some versions understand this as a reference to the Holy Spirit.

#### James 4:6

##### But God gives more grace

"But, even though our spirits may desire what we cannot have, God gives us even more grace if we will humble ourselves"

##### so the scripture

"that is why the scripture"

##### the proud

"proud people"

##### the humble

"humble people"

#### James 4:7

##### So submit

"Because God gives grace to the humble, so obey"

##### Resist the devil

"Oppose the devil"

##### he will flee

"he will run away"

##### you

Here this pronoun is plural and refers to James's audience.

#### James 4:8

##### Come close to God

Here the idea of coming close stands for becoming honest and open with God.

##### Cleanse your hands

"Behave in a way that honors God"

##### purify your hearts

"make your thoughts and intentions right"

##### you double-minded people

"you people who cannot decide if you want to obey God or not"

#### James 4:9

##### Grieve, mourn, and cry

James uses these words together to emphasize that the people should be truly sorry for not obeying God.

##### Let your laughter turn into mourning and your joy into gloom

"Stop laughing and mourn. Stop being joyful and be gloomy"

#### James 4:10

##### Humble yourselves before the Lord

"Be humble toward God."

##### he will exalt you

"he will honor you"

#### James 4:11

##### brothers

"fellow believers"

##### but a judge

"but you are acting like the person who gives the law"

#### James 4:12

##### Only one is the lawgiver and judge

"God is the only one who gives laws and judges people"

##### Who are you, you who judge your neighbor?

"You are just a human and cannot judge another human."

#### James 4:13

##### spend a year there

"stay there for a year"

#### James 4:14

##### Who knows what will happen tomorrow, and what is your life?

"No one knows what will happen tomorrow, and your life does not last very long!"

##### For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then disappears

"You live for only a short amount of time, and then you die"

#### James 4:15

##### Instead, you should say

"Instead, your attitude should be"

##### we will live and do this or that

"we will live long enough to do what we have planned to do." This "we" does not directly refer to James or his audience but is part of the example of how James's audience should consider the future.

#### James 4:17

##### for anyone who knows to do good but does not do it, for him it is sin

Anyone who fails to do the good he knows he should do is guilty of sin.

## Chapter 5

#### James 5:1

##### you who are rich

"you who are rich and say you honor God"

##### because of the miseries coming on you

"because you will suffer terribly in the future"

#### James 5:2

##### Your riches have rotted, and your clothes have become moth-eaten.

"Your riches will rot, and your clothes will be eaten by moths"

#### James 5:3

##### Your gold and your silver have become tarnished

"Your gold and silver will become tarnished"

##### have become tarnished ... their rust

"are ruined ... their ruined condition"

##### their rust will be a witness against you. It

"and when God judges you, your ruined treasures will be like someone who accuses you in court. Their corrosion"

##### will consume your flesh like fire

Here "flesh" stands for the physical body and corrosion is spoken of as if it were a fire that will burn up their owners. The idea of fire is meant to lead people to remember that fire often stands for God's punishment that will come on all the wicked.

##### for the last days

"for when God is about to judge you"

#### James 5:4

##### the wages you kept back from the laborers who mowed your fields are crying out against you

"God can see that you kept back the wages you should have given to those who mowed your fields"

##### The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts

"The Lord of hosts has heard the cries of the harvesters"

##### the ears of the Lord of hosts

God is spoken of as if he had ears as humans have.

#### James 5:5

##### You have fattened your hearts for a day of slaughter

"Your greed has only prepared your entire person for harsh eternal judgment"

#### James 5:6

##### You have condemned ... the righteous person

This is probably not "condemned" in the legal sense of a judge passing a sentence of death on a criminal. Instead, it probably refers to the wicked and powerful people who decide to mistreat the poor until they die.

##### the righteous person. He does not

"righteous people. They do not"

#### James 5:7

##### Be patient, then

"Because of this, wait and be calm"

##### until the Lord's coming

"until Christ's return"

##### the farmer

James makes an analogy using farmers and believers to teach what it means to be patient.

#### James 5:8

##### Strengthen your hearts

"Keep your faith strong"

##### the Lord's coming is near

"the Lord will return soon"

#### James 5:9

##### Do not complain, brothers ... you

James is writing to all the scattered Jewish believers.

##### against one another

"about each other"

##### you will not be condemned

"Christ will not condemn you"

##### See, the judge is standing at the door

"Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important: the judge is coming soon"

#### James 5:10

##### the suffering and patience of the prophets, those who spoke in the name of the Lord

"how the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord suffered persecution with patience"

##### spoke in the name of the Lord

"spoke by the authority of the Lord"

#### James 5:11

##### See, we regard

"Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important: we regard"

##### those who endured

"those who continued obeying God even through hardship"

#### James 5:12

##### Above all, my brothers,

"This is important, my fellow believers"

##### do not swear

"do not make an oath" or "do not make a vow"

##### either by heaven or by the earth

The words "heaven" and "earth" refer to the spiritual or human authorities that are in heaven and earth.

##### let your "Yes" mean "Yes" and your "No" mean "No,"

"If you say "Yes" or "No," say it truthfully"

##### so you do not fall under judgment

"so God will not punish you"

#### James 5:13

##### Is anyone among you suffering hardship? Let him pray

"If anyone is enduring troubles, he should pray"

##### Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise

"If anyone is happy, he should sing songs of praise"

#### James 5:14

##### Is anyone among you sick? Let him call

"If anyone is sick, he should call"

##### in the name of the Lord

"by the authority of the Lord" or "with the authority that the Lord has given them"

#### James 5:15

##### The prayer of faith will heal the sick person

"The Lord will hear the prayer of faith and will heal the sick person"

##### The prayer of faith

"The prayer made by believers" or "The prayer that people pray believing God will do as they ask"

##### the Lord will raise him up

"the Lord will make him well"

#### James 5:16

##### So confess your sins to one another

Admit to each other things you did wrong so that you can be forgiven.

##### so that you may be healed

"so that God may heal you"

##### The prayer of a righteous person is very strong in its working

"When the person who obeys God prays, God will do great things"

#### James 5:17

##### prayed earnestly

"prayed passionately"

##### in the land

There may have been rain in lands other than Israel, but it did not rain in Israel.

#### James 5:18

##### The heavens gave rain

"Rain fell from the sky"

##### the earth produced its fruit

Here the earth is presented as the source of the crops.

##### fruit

This stands for all the crops of the farmers.

#### James 5:19

##### if anyone among you strays from the truth, and someone brings him back

"whenever anyone stops obeying God, and another person helps him start obeying again"

#### James 5:20

##### whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way ... will cover over a great number of sins

James means that God will use the actions of this person to persuade the sinner to repent and be saved.

##### will save him from death and will cover over a great number of sins

"will save him from spiritual death, and God will forgive the sinner for all of his sins"

##### will cover over a great number of sins

Possible meaning: the disobedient brother, when he returns to the Lord, will have his sins forgiven. Sins are spoken of as if they were objects that God could cover so that he would not see them.