

Bible Reading Notes
James

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James 1

James is the earliest letter we have in the New Testament.

The author was the brother of Jesus, who was viewed as the leader of the church in Jerusalem.

1:14 – God sometimes tests our faith with trials, but our temptations come from our own sinful heart and desires.

1:18 – brought us forth – James is referring to our regeneration, God’s work of making us born again.

1:22 – be doers of the Word – This is the theme that James will come back to repeatedly. It is not enough to know the Word of God; we must do what we know.

1:27 – This is what it looks like to be a “doer” of the Word.

James 2

2:1 – The command to not show partiality is rooted in the command to be imitators of God, who does not show partiality (Leviticus 19:15).

2:14-26 – Contrast between an active faith and a purely intellectual faith that does not do the Word of God. Any faith that does not produce the fruit of good works is dead and so is useless.

James 3

3:1-12 – James, in his practical way, deals with the problem most of us have with our tongues. Genuine faith is evidenced in the ability to use our tongues wisely.

3:8 – no human being can tame the tongue – This can be done only through the power of the Holy Spirit.

3:18 – This reflects Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 5:9.

James 4

- 4:2c – This is a key principle for prayer. We have no right to expect God to give what we do not seek.
- 4:7 – Spiritual victory comes by God’s grace but through our determined and active resistance to the devil and sin.
- 4:9 – Instead of grumbling or seeking revenge, we are to wait on the Lord’s coming when he will right all wrongs.
- 4:13-17 – This passage does not condemn planning but does condemn planning that assumes all of life is under our control.

James 5

- 5:1 – rich – James speaks against the rich in this letter several times. The Bible does not condemn being wealthy. The rich James has in mind are those who have put their trust in their riches instead of God.
- 5:13-20 – Notice that James refers to prayer seven times in this paragraph.
- 5:17-18 – This refers to the event described in 1 Kings 17-18.