

# JAMES

**Author :**

In the New Testament there are several persons named James: the brother of John and one of the original apostles (Matt 10:2), the son of Alphaeus who was another of the original apostles (Matt 10:3), the father or brother of Judas who was one of the original apostles (see Luke 6:16 and note), and a younger half brother of the Lord Jesus (Matt 13:55). The author of this letter is generally thought to be the half brother of the Lord Jesus and a leader in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13). On the authorship of the books of the Bible, see the Introduction to Judges.

**Date :**

Probably sometime between 45 and 50 AD.

**Theme :**

The very important theme of proving one's faith by one's behavior. Genuine faith is shown to be so by enduring trials, by obedience to God's Word, by love and impartiality toward others, by good deeds and by the words the mouth speaks. A key verse is 2:17.

**Contents :**

Meeting with testing and trials .....	1:2-15
Counting it all joy .....	1:2
Knowing that it will produce good results .....	1:3,4
Asking God for wisdom .....	1:5-8
Both the poor and the rich should rejoice .....	1:9-11
The reward for patiently enduring trials .....	1:12
God does not tempt his people to do wrong .....	1:13
Temptation, desire, sin, and death .....	1:14,15
God's good gifts .....	1:16-18
Listening and doing .....	1:19-25
True religion .....	1:26,27
Dealing with others without favoritism .....	2:1-13
Dead faith .....	2:14-26
The tongue .....	3:1-12
Two kinds of wisdom .....	3:13-18
The reason for fights and quarrels .....	4:1,2
Wrong motive in prayer .....	4:3
The world is opposed to God .....	4:4
Humility and submission toward God .....	4:5-7
Resisting the devil and its result .....	4:7
How to come to God .....	4:8-10
Judging is not the Christian's job .....	4:11,12
Boasting about tomorrow .....	4:13-17
Exhortation to the rich .....	5:1-6
Patience .....	5:7-11
Swearing .....	5:12
What to do in good times and bad .....	5:13-16
Power in prayer .....	5:17,18
Turning sinners toward God .....	5:19,20

**1** James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the trying of your faith produces patient endurance. 4 But let patient endurance have *its* perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask *it* from

God, who gives to everyone liberally and without criticizing, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, without wavering at all. For he who wavers is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man think that he will receive any thing from the Lord. 8 A double-minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.

9 Let the brother in lowly circumstances rejoice because he is exalted, 10 but the rich because he

**1:1** "James" – there are several persons with this name in the New Testament (Matt 10:2,3; Mark 15:40; Luke 6:16; Matt 13:55). More than likely it was James the half-brother of Jesus who wrote this letter. During Christ's lifetime neither James nor his brothers believed Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God. But after Christ's death and resurrection they became believers (Acts 1:14). Later on James became the leader of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; Acts 15:13; Gal 1:9).

"Lord" – one who did not believe in Him before the resurrection now recognizes who He really is. See 2:1.

"Twelve tribes which are scattered" – there were twelve tribes in Israel, and "twelve tribes" became another name for the Jewish people. But James was writing to Christians (2:1). So we can say he wrote to Jews who had become Christians in the countries and regions outside Israel.

**1:2-4** "Count it all joy" – while undergoing trials our attitude is very important. If we are convinced they will bring a good result and are permitted by God for the perfecting of our spiritual life, then we can regard it as "all" joy. See John 16:33; Rom 5:3-5; 2 Cor 8:2. God wants His people to be spiritual and strong in faith. He wants us to be "perfect and complete" (compare Eph 4:13-15). He wants us to be able to patiently endure anything that may come to us in this life. Trials are one means God uses to produce this result. See Ps 66:10-12.

"Trials" – the Greek word here means either trials or temptations or both. Trials seems a better translation in the context here.

"Knowing" – this is the important thing. Knowing a good result will follow helps us to endure what brings the good result.

"Patient endurance" – Col 1:11; 2 Thess 1:4; 2 Tim 2:12; 3:10; Heb 12:10; 1 Pet 2:20. In Greek "patient endurance" is one word, which contains both meanings. By using this word James teaches us to endure whatever comes and to go patiently on trusting Christ and serving God. Without this quality our trials will not do us the good that they otherwise could do. Can we not rejoice about anything that brings us out of spiritual infancy and makes us better fit to live for God?

"Perfect" – the Greek word means "finished", "lacking nothing for completeness", "mature", "fully developed", etc.

**1:5** The trials we face – the testing of our

faith – will sometimes confuse and perplex us. We may not understand what God is doing or why He is dealing with us as He is. By our reasoning we will not understand why trials have come to us or how to make use of them spiritually. We need a wisdom that comes from God so we will know how to face trials and all the varied circumstances of life. Let us ask God for it, both for ourselves and for others. He delights to give it – Col 1:9; 2:3; Eph 1:17; 1 Cor 1:36; 2:6-10; Dan 2:20,21; Prov 1:20; 2:6; 8:1; Ps 51:6; 111:10. James describes this wisdom in 3:17.

"Liberally" – Matt 7:9-11; 2 Cor 9:8; Phil 4:19; 1 Tim 6:17.

"Without criticizing" – God does not criticize us when we come to Him; He does not refuse us because we are unworthy or do not pray in a perfect manner. We can come boldly to Him counting on His love and grace – Heb 4:15,16.

"It will be given" – this is a promise from the God who cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

**1:6-8** "But. . .ask in faith" – here is one thing absolutely necessary if we want our prayers answered. See Heb 11:6. Believing prayer makes all things possible (Mark 9:23; 11:23,24).

"Wavering", "double-minded" – expressions indicating doubt or unbelief. Unbelief is the same as calling God a liar (1 John 5:9,10). In other words, it is saying that God will not do what He says He will do. Doubting means to lean to the side of unbelief. It is to be without a firm trust in God's character and promises. Facing a promise of God faith says "God will do it", unbelief says "He will not", doubt says "He may or may not." In all his dealings with God and God's Word a doubter will be "unstable." He will always be pulled in two directions. He won't be settled in his thoughts, his motives, his aims, or his dedication to God's will. The very reason why he is a doubter is that he has a divided heart. See David's prayer in Ps 86:11.

All believers are tempted to doubt at some time or other. We must learn to resist this temptation, and rest in the truth that what God says He will surely do. In this Abraham is a great example to us – Rom 4:18-21. What is the cure for doubt? The Word of God (Rom 10:17), meditating on God's promises and God's character (Ps 1:2,3), and full consecration to Him and His will (Rom 12:1,2).

**1:9** "Lowly. . .exalted" – God, the great

is made low, for like the flower of the grass he will pass away. 11 For as soon as the sun has risen with burning heat, it withers the grass, and its flower falls, and the beauty of its appearance perishes. So also the rich man will fade away in his ways.

12 Blessed *is* the man who endures trials, for when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love him.

13 When tempted let no one say, "I am tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone. 14 But each person is tempted, being drawn away by his own evil desire,

Creator of the universe, has raised poor, uneducated believers, whom the world counts as complete nobodies, to great heights in Christ. He has made them His own children and chosen them for a great future (John 1:12,13; Rom 8:29,30; Eph 2:6,7). In Christ no distinction is made between rich and poor, slave and master, educated and illiterate (1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11). The poor man should recognize this and have great joy and satisfaction because of his high position in Christ.

**1:10** "Rich. . .made low" – the rich man who is a believer has the same high position in Christ as the poor man. But through Christ he has learned (in a way he did not learn before) of his frailty and mortality. He can know that self-abasement is the way to exaltation (Matt 18:4; 23:12). He has learned his sinfulness and the great truth that apart from God's grace he can have no good thing either in the present or in the future. He must find joy and satisfaction in all this. We should all rejoice in any truth that brings us down low before God. See 4:6.

**1:11** Compare Ps 103:15; Isa 40:6-8; 1 Pet 1:23-25.

**1:12** "Blessed" – compare Ps 1:1; 119:1; Matt 5:3-12. Trials work for the good of believers both now and hereafter – vs 2-4; 2 Cor 4:17.

"Crown" – note at 2 Tim 4:8. See also 1 Cor 9:25; Phil 4:1; Rev 3:11; 4:10. The "crown of life" appears again in Rev 2:10. There, too, it is promised to those who faithfully endure trials; in other words, to those of genuine faith who prove their faith (and their love) by such endurance.

"Love Him" – this is the motive power which enables believers to persevere under trials (1 Cor 13:6). This perseverance is the evidence of their love.

**1:13** God tests us and proves us, but does not tempt us (Gen 22:1; Ps 66:10-12). Matt 6:13 is a prayer He delights to answer.

"Tempted by evil" – no evil, no sin has the slightest attraction for God. He utterly, eternally hates all wrong – Lev 20:7; Deut 12:31; Ps 11:5; Prov 6:16-19.

**1:14** We are not innately, naturally holy as God is. Our old nature is fallen and corrupted. That is why sin has an attraction for us (Gal 5:16,17; Rom 7:15-20; Eph 4:22-24).

and enticed. 15 Then when desire has conceived, it brings forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.

16 Make no mistake, my dear brethren, 17 every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variability, or shadow of turning. 18 Of his own will he begot us with the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of firstfruits of his creation.

19 So, my beloved brethren, let everyone be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to get angry. 20 For the anger of man does not produce the

Satan knows this very well and brings enticing, tempting things before us (1 Thess 3:5). But if we give in to temptations the fault lies only in us, and we should not dream of blaming God for it. Compare 1 Cor 10:13.

**1:15** Spiritual death is the final result of sin. Compare Gen 2:17; Rom 5:12; 8:6. Acts of sin have their beginning in desire (Gen 3:6; 2 Pet 1:4; 1 John 2:16). In the strength given by God believers must fight in the battlefield of their desires, and win before desire brings forth sin.

**1:16** "Make no mistake" – v 22; 1 Cor 6:9; Gal 6:7; Eph 5:6; 1 John 1:8.

**1:17** God's gifts can be nothing less than good and perfect. They cannot be tainted with sin or promote sin. If men abuse God's gifts and make with them opportunities for sin, the fault is in men, not in God's gifts.

"Father of lights" – God is the creator and giver of every kind of light – literal and spiritual (Gen 1:3,14-16; Luke 1:78,79; John 1:4,5; 3:19; 2 Cor 4:6).

"No variability" – Num 23:19; 1 Sam 15:29; Mal 3:6; Heb 1:10-12; 13:8. God is eternally perfect. He does not need to develop and grow. Nothing can be added to His character, nothing taken away.

**1:18** Here is God's greatest and best gift to men.

"Begot us" – gave us the new birth, made us His own children – John 1:12,13; 3:3-8; 1 Pet 1:23. This was God's way of delivering us from sin and death (v 15). "The word of truth" He used to give us this new birth is the gospel of Christ.

"Firstfruits" – Rom 11:16; 1 Cor 15:20, 23; Rev 14:4. Believers now are "firstfruits" of a greater harvest still to come.

**1:19,20** From thoughts of the new birth he turns to thoughts of what that experience should produce in our lives.

"Swift to hear" – he may mean swift to hear God's Word, or, possibly, a willingness to listen to what others have to say.

"Speak" – 3:1-8; Prov 10:19; 13:3; 17:28; 29:20; Matt 12:36,37. People who talk too much will surely say much that is useless or wrong or harmful, and they will not be able to hear what they should hear.

"Slow to get angry" – Matt 5:22; Eph 4:26; Prov 16:32. Man's anger, even so-called righteous anger, does not establish or

righteousness of God. 21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and the abounding wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls.

22 But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like a man seeing his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he sees himself, and goes his way, and immediately forgets what he looked like. 25 But whoever looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues *to do so*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the deed, this man will be blessed in what he does.

26 If anyone among you seems to be religious, and does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man's religion *is* useless. 27 Pure and faultless religion before God the Father is this: To look after the fatherless and widows in their

promote God's righteousness. Compare 2 Tim 2:24,25. Gentleness and meekness are much more useful than any kind of anger we can display.

**1:21** "Lay aside" - Eph 4:22-32; 5:3,4; Col 3:5-10.

"The implanted Word" - the Word of God planted in our hearts. Compare Matt 13:3-9,18-22. If God's Word sown in us is to produce a harvest we must humbly, believingly accept it, yield to it and let it work. God's Word in the heart has power to transform and save.

**1:22-24** Hearing the teachings of the Bible without acting according to them is useless. Mere hearing only increases our condemnation. In the parable of the sower all four classes of people hear the Word (Matt 13:19,20,22,23), but only one class produces fruit. The Jews were great for reading the Word and hearing it and memorizing it, but (like most of us) not so great in acting according to what they heard (Matt 23:3; Acts 7:53; Rom 2:17-24). See in Matt 7:21-27 the emphasis the Lord Jesus put on obedience to His teaching. A great many who are called Christians will be lost forever because they have not done what the Word of God says they must do to be saved. And many more will lose the rewards they might have had because they did not do what God's Word told them to do.

**1:23** "Mirror" - the Bible is like a mirror. If we inspect ourselves in it, it will show us exactly what we are. But if we do not act according to this knowledge, it will do us no good and we will soon forget it.

**1:25** The law of Moses brought bondage - Acts 15:10; Gal 5:1. Believers are free from that law - Rom 6:14; 7:4. But they are under Christ's law - 1 Cor 9:21 - a law of grace and love. This law when obeyed gives freedom - not freedom to sin, but freedom from sinning.

**1:26** Verse 19; 3:2-12. On every hand there

trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

**2** My brethren, having faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, do not show favoritism. 2 For if a man with a gold ring and fine clothes comes to your meeting, and a poor man in dirty clothes also comes, 3 and you show respect to the one who wears the fine clothes, and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit here by my footstool," 4 are you not showing partiality among yourselves, and becoming judges with evil thoughts?

5 Listen, my dear brethren, has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to those who love him? 6 But you have treated the poor with

are many who do not control their tongues. Evidently, then, many are self-deceived and have a useless form of worship.

**1:27** We should understand that God does not accept every kind of worship and religion - Matt 15:8,9. Compare Ps 50:7-21; Isa 1:11-17. The kind of religion God wants to see is love and holiness in action, not merely in word. God has a special concern for the weak and helpless and poor - Ex 22:22; 23:11; Lev 23:22; Deut 10:18; 24:19; Ps 146:19; Isa 1:17; other references at Gal 2:10. We too must have concern for them, if we want to be pleasing to Him. God has a hatred for the pollutions of the world. So must we have if we want our worship to be fully acceptable to Him (Rom 1:18; 2 Cor 6:17; 7:1; 1 Pet 1:15,16; Jude 23).

**2:1** "The Lord of glory" - 1 Cor 2:8. Notes on Lord at Luke 2:11; Phil 2:10,11.

**2:1-4** God does not show favoritism or partiality. As believers in Christ we must follow Him in this (Rom 2:11; 1 Cor 12:13; Eph 6:9; Col 3:11,25; 1 Tim 5:21; 1 Pet 1:17). It is a sad truth that this instruction is often ignored and disobeyed in churches. James (and God's Spirit speaking through James) plainly tells us that favoritism comes from "evil thoughts" (v 4). In Christ we are to accept all men alike, and honor and respect all alike - Rom 12:10,16. Looking down on fellow believers because they are poor, or uneducated, or poorly dressed, or from a different class or group or caste, or for any other reason, must have no place among Christ's people.

**2:5** Compare Luke 6:20. See also Matt 11:5; Luke 4:18; 1 Cor 1:26. It is far, far better to be rich in faith than to be rich in material things.

"Heirs" - Matt 5:5; 1 Cor 6:9; 15:50; Gal 5:21; Heb 1:14; 6:12; Rev 21:7. Note on God's kingdom at Matt 4:17.

"Love Him" - 1:12. Those who do not love God will have no inheritance with Him - 1 Cor 16:22; 1 John 4:8.

contempt. Do not rich men oppress you, and drag you to court? 7 Do they not blaspheme that worthy name by which you are called?

8 If you fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," you do well. 9 But if you show favoritism, you commit sin and are convicted by the Law as transgressors. 10 For whoever keeps the whole Law, and yet goes wrong in one *point*, he is guilty of *breaking* the whole *Law*. 11 For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," said also, "Do not commit murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the Law.

12 So speak and act as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For the one who has not

shown mercy will have judgment without mercy. And mercy rejoices against judgment.

14 What use *is it*, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, and does not have works? Can *such* faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing, and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them those things which are needful to the body, what *is the* use? 17 Even so faith, if it is without works, is dead, being alone.

18 Yes, a man may say, "You have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." 19 You believe that there is one God. You do well *to believe it*, but the devils also believe *it*, and tremble.

20 But do you want to know, O foolish man,

**2:7** "Name" – Christ.

**2:8** "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" – Lev 19:18; Matt 19:19; 22:39; Luke 10:27; Rom 13:9,10; Gal 5:14.

"Royal law" – it is the supreme law relating to human relationships, and given by the King of kings for all those in His kingdom.

**2:9** "Favoritism" – James takes us back to vs 1-4. Looking down on the poor and showing favoritism to the rich is a sin. It is disobedience to God's greatest law for men.

**2:10** A person is a lawbreaker if he keeps all the law and disobeys only one command. And if he disobeys the command to love he is breaking a very great command and so is a very great sinner. So we see that showing favoritism is not at all a small matter. We should see also that every one of us in some way or other is guilty of breaking God's law. And we are worthy of the whole condemnation of the law (Col 3:10). Everyone of us needs forgiveness through Christ (Rom 3:9,19,23).

"Goes wrong" – the literal meaning of the Greek word is "stumbles", but in the context it means to break a law of God. See 3:2 where the same word is used.

**2:11** Ex 20:13,14. Observe how he joins adultery, murder, and showing favoritism together in one brief passage. In this way he shows the seriousness of the sin of showing partiality or favoritism, of exalting some and looking down on others.

**2:12** "Judged" – 2 Cor 5:9,10.

"Liberty" – 1:25. If we are at all wise we will behave toward others in the light of the coming judgment.

**2:13** Matt 5:7; 7:1,2; 18:23-35; Luke 6:37,38; Prov 21:13; Ps 18:25,26.

**2:14** "Can such faith save him?" – clearly the answer is "No, such faith cannot save him." The reason is this: such faith is not genuine faith, not the kind of saving faith the Bible speaks about. The plain teaching of the Bible is this: we are saved by God's grace through faith apart from works (Eph 2:8,9; Rom 3:24,25,28; 4:5). But through this way of grace and faith God transforms people. He gives them new

spiritual birth. He makes them a new creation. See 1:18; 2 Cor 5:17. Such people are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good deeds (Eph 2:10). Good deeds are a part of the evidence that our faith is real, that God has done His work in our hearts (Heb 6:10; Gal 5:6).

A consistent lack of good works is proof that our faith is only in words, that we have not been changed by God's grace. True faith is a powerful force in a person's life. See notes at Heb 10:39; 11:4.

**2:15-17** All words and no action is a mark of spiritual death. Compare 1 John 3:17,18. A person who behaves in this way shows he does not have God's love in him. If he does not have love he does not know God (1 John 4:8). In other words, the faith he claims to have is not real (note and references on giving at 2 Cor 9:15). What is "dead" faith? A faith that does not produce what God wants to see – mercy, love, kindness, etc (Gal 5:22,23). A dead faith may be very orthodox. It may believe the right doctrines. It may persuade itself that it has a firm belief in God and His Word. But it has not laid hold of the Lord Jesus in a saving, life-giving way. Compare John 5:39,40.

**2:18** Someone may object to James' teaching and say, "some people have faith, others have deeds. They are both an important part of religion. But the one can exist without the other." James denies this. He insists that if there are no good deeds there is no faith. It is quite impossible to show faith without deeds.

**2:19** Demons know the truth about God and Christ. See also Mark 5:2-7. They "believe", but they are not saved. They believe, but they are without good works. They do not have a living faith that changes them. It is a sad and terrible truth that many very religious people, including many Christians, have no more of a living faith than demons. They believe there is one God, but they are merciless, unloving, selfish and hard-hearted. And what good will the faith of demons do them?

**2:20** "Foolish" – the Greek word literally

that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see how faith was working with his deeds, and that faith was made perfect by works? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness," and he was called "the friend of God." 24 You see then that a man is justified by deeds, and not by faith only.

25 In the same way was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent *them* out another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.

means "empty" and here signifies a person who is lacking in the wisdom God gives, an empty-headed man, a "hollow" man.

"Dead" - a dead faith will never produce anything useful. And if it produces nothing useful, how can it be acceptable to God?

**2:21-26** James is not at all contradicting the teachings of the apostle Paul in Rom 1:16,17; 3:22-28; 4:5; 10:9,10; Eph 2:8,9. He is giving the opposite side of the same truth. He is showing that true faith and good works are absolutely inseparable - so united that what can be said of one may be said of both together. He is teaching what Paul himself taught in Rom 2:7-10; Gal 5:6; Eph 2:10; Titus 2:14. And what the Lord Jesus taught in Matt 7:21,24-27; 25:35-43.

Faith that does not express itself through love is useless, dead faith. James' language suggests that since good works come out of faith, they may be considered a part of faith. James is not contradicting Paul. He is opposing those who said that bare faith is sufficient even if it never results in good actions.

**2:21** Gen 22:1-18.

**2:22** If faith and actions do not work together they will not work apart. Actions are the evidence of faith, the fulfillment of faith, faith itself revealed to view.

**2:23** See Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3. Both James and his readers knew that this event took place many years before Abraham offered Isaac. God had already counted Abraham righteous through faith. But Abraham's faith was living and proved itself when he offered Isaac. We might even say that the offering of Isaac was inherent in Abraham's faith long before he actually offered him.

"The friend of God" - 2 Chron 20:7. Compare John 15:15.

**2:24** He is speaking this way for the sake of emphasis. He means that God justifies men through the kind of faith that will produce good deeds, the kind of faith that has good deeds inherent in it.

**2:25** Joshua 2:1-21; Heb 11:31. If Rahab had not had faith she would not have acted as she did. Her actions came out of her faith, were the proof of her faith.

**2:26** Faith that does not produce good works,

**3** My brethren, do not be many teachers *in the church*, knowing that we *teachers* will receive more *severe* judgment. 2 For all of us go wrong in many ways. If anyone does not go wrong in what he says, that person is a complete man, able also to control the whole body.

3 See, we put bits in the horses' mouths, so that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole body. 4 See also the ships. Though *they are* so large, and *are* driven by fierce winds, yet they are turned about with a very small rudder, wherever the pilot desires. 5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasts great things. See, what a great forest is set on fire by such a little flame! 6 And the tongue *is* a flame, a world of evil. Among

that does not have good works inherent in it, is like a corpse. It is lifeless, inactive, and will soon begin to stink. Is our faith active? Is it producing fruit for God? If not, let us shudder and tremble as demons do (v 19), and let us repent and turn to God with all our hearts.

**3:1-12** A Bible teacher has a very solemn responsibility. First of all, he should live according to the truth he is teaching. Since he has more knowledge, God will require more of him, and will judge him more severely. See Luke 12:47,48. So teaching the Bible is a very serious matter. The more so because they and all other believers "go wrong in many ways." And they have to use a very dangerous instrument in their work - the tongue. So no one should rush into the work of teaching. Each teacher should be sure God is calling him for that and has given him the gift of teaching (Rom 12:6,7). Of course, a teacher called and prepared by God to teach His Word has a very wonderful and satisfying task, and can do much good. All such teachers may well rejoice - with trembling - in this glorious calling.

**3:2** "Go wrong" - see 2:10, where the same Greek word is used, also Rom 11:11. The Greek word is "stumble" but when used figuratively means to go astray, to err, do wrong, or sin. Observe that James says we "all" do this, and in many ways. How good it is, then, to have Matt 6:12; 1 John 1:9.

"In what he says" - James is saying that the tongue is more difficult to control than anything else a person has. And the one who has mastered his (or her) tongue is a complete, mature person, well-fitted for the work God has for him.

**3:3-5** The point is that small things can have great effects. The tongue has more power for good or ill than any other part of the body. It has amazing power. It can build or tear down, create or destroy. It can be a tree of life (Prov 15:4; 18:21), or the fang of a snake (Ps 140:3). It can be a murdering sword (Ps 57:4), or a healing medicine (Prov 12:18). It can promote trouble and evil (Ps 10:7), or justice and righteousness (Ps 37:30; 51:14).

**3:6** James is speaking of the untamed

our members the tongue is such that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell.

7 All kinds of beasts and birds, and serpents, and creatures in the sea, are being tamed, and have been tamed, by man. 8 But the tongue no one can tame. *It is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we praise God, the Father, and with it we curse men who have been made in the likeness of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceeds praising and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. 11 Does a spring send forth from the same place sweet and bitter *water*? 12 Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olives? Or a vine, figs? In the same way no spring can give

tongue, the tongue as it is by nature. And by "tongue", of course, he means the power to speak, to communicate what is in the mind and heart.

"Flame" – the tongue can be a great destroyer (Ps 52:2). One spark from it can ignite a fire which destroys many people. The tongue is a whole "world" in itself. And by nature this world is evil – Ps 58:3. It is on fire with desire and sin, and the fire has come from hell. Satan has taught human beings to lie and deceive and slander and blaspheme and curse. These things are fire which destroys lives.

**3:7,8** Has there been a single person in the whole of human history (apart from Christ) who always controlled his own tongue completely? Abraham did not – Gen 13:11-20; 20:2-9; 17:17,18. Moses did not – Num 20:10-12; Ps 106:33. Peter did not – Matt 26:69-74. Paul did not – Acts 23:2-5. James confesses he did not. This is not to say we should not try to control our tongues. We must. Far better to have some control over it than to have none at all (Ps 141:3; Prov 10:19; 11:12; 21:23). The best of all is to have our hearts and minds filled with God's Word and then our tongues will speak good things – Matt 12:34-37; Col 3:16. Though alone we cannot control our tongues, God and His Word can.

"Unruly" – Ps 39:1-3.

"Deadly poison" – Ps 58:4; Rom 3:13.

**3:9,10** This should not be so, need not be so, but often it is so. Some men are like saints in public, but like demons at home or in private.

"The likeness of God" – Gen 1:26,27; Eph 4:24.

**3:11,12** In all creation it seems only man's tongue has a double source and a double channel.

**3:13-18** There are two kinds of wisdom in the world. One comes from Satan (v 15), and the other comes from God (v 17). The results which flow from the one are very different indeed from the results which flow from the other. We can tell whether a person is really wise by what we see in his life. No one has the wisdom which comes from God who is evil or proud or envious or selfish or

both salt water and fresh.

13 Who *is* a wise man and has understanding among you? Let him show it by good behaviour, by his deeds with the meekness *produced by* wisdom.

14 But if you have bitter envy and strife in your hearts, do not boast, and do not deny the truth. 15 This wisdom does not come down from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where envy and strife *are*, there *is* confusion and every evil work.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, readily obedient, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

worldly-minded or unspiritual. Such people may gain a reputation for wisdom with men. They may think they are wise. They may be very intellectual, very bright, very clever. But God sees where their so-called wisdom comes from. For another comparison between these two kinds of wisdom see 1 Cor 1:17 - 2:16.

**3:13** Only the good are wise. An evil man is a fool no matter how much intellect he has. Humility is one of the fruits of true wisdom. Those who have the wisdom that comes from God will not exalt themselves, will never think that they themselves are God or any similar wicked nonsense (Ps 14:1; 111:10; Prov 3:7; 8:1-8).

**3:14** "Envy" – Job.5:2; Prov 14:30; 23:17; Matt 27:18; Mark 7:22; Rom 1:29; 1 Cor 13:4; Gal 5:26.

"Do not boast" – can a person filled with bitterness, envy and strife still be a boaster? Oh yes, partly by denying that it is true.

**3:15** Do many religious people (including some professing Christians) have the devil's wisdom, and not God's? Their actions, aims and ambitions lead us to think so. A lack of meekness, a spirit of envy and strife, boasting, denying truth – these do not reveal the wisdom God gives.

**3:16** See the result of Satan's wisdom working in the minds of men.

**3:17** "From above" – heavenly wisdom, God's wisdom – Prov 8:22,23; 1 Cor 1:24,30; 2:7,13; Col 2:3.

"Pure" – the wisdom God gives is free from any kind of sin or defilement or corruption, and it does not lead to any such things. It is holy and separate from the wisdom of this world. This wisdom loves peace between God and men and between men and men. It is kind and concerned for the well-being of others and is obedient to God. It recognizes the truth of Matt 5:7,9 and puts it into practice. It produces good fruit for God's glory. It makes us impartial in our treatment of others (2:1), and sincere (Acts 2:46; 2 Cor 1:12; 6:6; 1 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 1:5; Heb 10:22; 1 Pet 1:22). There is no hypocrisy whatever in it. If we do not have such wisdom, let us ask God for it, and let us believe that He will give it to us – 1:5.6.

**3:18** Righteousness grows when there are

**4** Where do conflicts and fights among you *come* from? *Do they* not *come* from your desires that are at war in your members? **2** You desire and do not have; you kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain *what you want*; you fight and struggle, yet you do not have, because you do not ask *God*. **3** You ask, and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, that you may use *it* up on your desires.

**4** You adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that the friendship of the world is enmity toward God? Therefore whoever wants to be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. **5** Do you

right relationships between God and men, and between men and men. Peace and righteousness go together and both flow from God's wisdom – Ps 85:10; Prov 3:17; Isa 32:17. Therefore, with all our getting, let us get wisdom (Prov 2:3-6).

**4:1,2** Here are some of the results from having the devil's "wisdom" (3:15) instead of the wisdom God gives. The picture is a raging war within the heart, and this war erupts into quarrels with other men. Compare 1 Cor 3:3; Gal 5:17.

"Kill, and desire" – James is writing to Jews who professed to be followers of Christ. Evidently the behavior of some revealed them to be followers of Satan (John 8:44). Wrong desire is at the root of all the corruption in the world (1:15).

"You do not ask God" – rather than pray, some people prefer to quarrel, fight and even kill to get what they want.

**4:3** Notice carefully why God sometimes does not answer prayer, and what is meant by wrong motives. God does not always give us what we ask for because, if He did, it would only make us more selfish, and worse in every way. A desire for selfish pleasure is often the reason why people ask for things. We should not blame God if He does not give them. God is not like some foolish parents who give whatever a child wants whether it is good for him or not. Let us open our hearts to God and sincerely pray as He wants us to pray (Ps 139:23,24; 66:18; Matt 6:9-13).

**4:4** "Adulterers and adulteresses" – there may have been individuals among them guilty of literal adultery, but James probably means adultery in spiritual matters, since he immediately speaks of friendship with the world. On adultery in spiritual matters see Jer 2:2; 3:6-9; Ezek 16:31-34; Hos 1:2. It means that those who are called God's people forsake God for something else.

Why is friendship with the world hatred toward God? The word "world" here means the fallen sinful world of men. It is clearly described in John 3:19; 7:7; 15:18-21; Gal 1:3; 1 John 2:15-17; 5:19. It is in rebellion against God. It loves sin and hates Christ. So to have friendship with it is to join the enemies of the one holy and true God, and to become His enemy. Let us take these solemn words to heart. Will we dare to be

think that the Scripture says in vain, The spirit that dwells in us desires jealously? **6** But he gives more grace. Therefore he says,

God resists the proud,  
but gives grace to the humble.

**7** Therefore submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **8** Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners, and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. **9** Grieve and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your*

friends with the world that crucified the Lord Jesus? Will we follow its aims and ambitions, its desires and pleasures, its methods and ways? Let us beware. Compare Rom 12:2.

**4:5** The Greek here is very difficult. It could be translated in several different ways. For example, besides the above translation it could mean – "God jealously longs for the spirit He has made to live in us", or "The Spirit [the Holy Spirit] He caused to live in us longs jealously." In any case, James is saying that in spite of what men are by nature, God can enable us by His grace to renounce the world and draw near to Him (vs 6-8), and this is what God desires. God is a "jealous" lover of our spirits and wants us for Himself. See Ex 20:5; 34:14; Deut 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; Josh 24:19. "My child", He says to each of us, "give me your heart."  
**4:6** Prov 3:34; 1 Pet 5:5.

"Proud" – Prov 6:16,17; 16:5; 21:4; Isa 2:12-18; 13:11. If we allow pride to rule us God will be our enemy and will fight against us.

"Grace" – John 1:14,16,17; Rom 5:2,20, 21. God's grace is what we need in order to reject the world, overcome our selfish desires and devote ourselves to God.

"Humble" – 3:13; Ps 138:6; Prov 16:19; Isa 57:15; 66:2; Matt 5:3; 18:3,4.

**4:7** "Submit" – this is what the humble do, what the proud will not do.

"He will flee" – here is a great promise. Satan is afraid of those who resist him in the strength God gives. But he will run only from those who submit themselves to God. Submitting comes first, then resisting the devil. Note on the devil at Matt 4:1. To resist the devil in one's own strength or in pride is to ask for a fall.

**4:8** This is another great promise we can always count on, if we come to God in the manner he tells us to come. Compare Zech 1:3.

"Cleanse" – compare Isa 1:16,17.

"Purify your hearts" – compare Ezek 18:31. James is speaking about full repentance (notes at Matt 3:2,8), and the earnest use of the means God has given for cleansing – 1 Pet 1:22; 1 John 1:7,9.

"Double-minded" – 1:8. If we want God to draw near to us we must turn from all known sin and have a firm faith in Him.

**4:9** Matt 5:4; Luke 6:21; 2 Cor 7:8-10.



joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will lift you up.

11 Do not speak evil about one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of *his* brother, and judges his brother, is speaking evil of the Law, and judging the Law. But if you judge the Law, you are not a doer of the Law, but a judge. 12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you that judges another?

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into a certain city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and make a profit."

14 The fact is you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away. 15 Instead you *ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live, and do this, or that." 16 But

now you boast in your arrogant presumption. All such boasting is evil. 17 Therefore to him who knows to do good, and does not do *it*, to him it is sin.

**5** Come now, *you* rich men, weep and howl because of your miseries that will come on *you*. 2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you, and will eat your flesh as if it were fire. You have heaped together wealth for the last days. 4 See, the wages of the labourers who have harvested your fields, which you have fraudulently kept, cry out, and the cries of those who have done the harvesting have entered into the ears of the Lord of hosts. 5 You have lived in pleasure and

James is speaking of sorrow for sin. God does not draw near to bless those who take sin lightly. How long should our grief and mourning continue? Until we know that God has drawn near, forgiven us, and lifted us up. We must do a thorough work of repenting (Jer 29:13).

**4:10** Verse 6; Luke 1:52; 1 Sam 2:7,8; Ps 15:1,3; 50:20; Prov 10:18; Matt 15:19; 23:12; Eph 4:31; Col 3:8.

**4:11** "Do not speak evil" – slander is a work of the devil and the meaning of his name. What business do Christians have doing the devil's work? Anyone who speaks against another is judging him (or her). The law tells us to love others as ourselves (2:8). Speaking against them is not loving them. And if a person does so he is setting himself above the law, and treating it as if its words have no importance, and becomes a judge of it.

**4:12** "Lawgiver" – Isa 33:22; Ex 20:1.

"To save and to destroy" – Matt 10:28; Isa 43:11.

"Who are you that judges another" – Matt 7:1,2; Rom 14:4,10-13.

**4:13** Here is another very common fault even among Christians. Some make their plans as if God were not important to them, as if they were perfectly able to carry on their affairs without His guidance and help.

**4:14** Compare 1:10,11; Job 7:7; Ps 39:5; 102:3; 144:4; Prov 27:1; 1 Pet 1:24; Luke 12:16-20. We do not know what natural calamity may come tomorrow, or what accident may befall us, or whether tomorrow is our last day on earth.

**4:15** "Say" – he certainly is not suggesting that we should merely say the words that follow as a kind of ritual. We should mean them and submit ourselves to the will of God and do what He tells us to do (v 7; Matt 6:10; John 4:34; Acts 21:14; Rom 1:10; 12:1,2).

**4:16** "Now you boast" – Ps 52:1; 75:4; Jer 9:23; Amos 4:5; 1 Cor 4:7; Gal 6:13. Men like to boast about what they have done or what they think they will do or can do. God tells us what such boasting is like.

**4:17** Luke 12:47; John 9:41; 2 Pet 2:21. They may have been acting as they did in ignorance, but now they would know the right way to behave and can have no excuse. Observe that good left undone is sin just as evil done is sin. Compare Num 32:23; 1 Sam 12:23; Matt 25:41-46.

**5:1-6** "You rich men" – James is speaking to the selfish rich who oppress the poor and care nothing for what God says about heaping up riches (Ps 37:16; 52:6,7; 62:10; Prov 11:28; Matt 6:19-21; Luke 12:16-21; 14:33; 1 Tim 6:6-10,17-19).

**5:1** "Miseries that will come on you" – Luke 6:24,25; 16:19-31.

**5:2,3** "Corroded" – James uses the past tense, not because this wealth had already been destroyed, but to show how certain it was that this would happen. And he is showing the eventual worthlessness of earthly riches. Whatever those riches are they will perish and leave those who had them naked before God. James knew that gold does not literally "corrode." He is stating in vivid language the fact that absolutely nothing will remain to the rich of what they had loved and hoarded.

"Heaped together wealth" – with so many people poor, destitute, starving and dying in the world, hoarding riches is a great crime. And the rich will pay for it with the misery God will send on them (v 1). They will find that piling up riches costs too much.

**5:4** "Labourers" – the Bible is for the poor, the working man, the down-trodden.

"The ears of the Lord of hosts" – there is a just Judge on high, and we may be sure He hears the cries of those oppressed by the rich.

**5:5** "Luxury" – Luke 16:19,25. Woe to those who deny themselves nothing they want. Compare Luke 9:23. Selfishness will always end in disaster.

"Slaughter" – the end of their luxury and self-indulgence is death. James compares them to dumb cattle being fattened only to be slaughtered (compare Amos 4:1). Let us learn to seek the truly important things

luxury on the earth. You have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned *and* killed the righteous, *when* he was not resisting you.

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it, until he receives the early and later rains. 8 You also be patient *and* make your hearts firm, for the coming of the Lord draws near. 9 Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be judged. See, the judge is standing at the door!

10 My brethren, as an example of patient suffering take the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord. 11 See *that* we count them

during our brief stay on earth – salvation, wisdom, righteousness, truth, holiness (Matt 6:33; etc).

**5:6** It is a strange and terrible fact that men, who are here today and gone tomorrow, will kill or trample any law of God under their feet to get money or property. Truly “madness is in their hearts while they live” (Eccl 9:3).

**5:7** “Brethren” – James leaves off his remarks to the rich and speaks again to believers. Though they are facing oppression and hardships they should be patient (Rom 12:12; Gal 5:22; Col 1:11; Heb 6:12).

“The coming of the Lord” – Matt 16:27; John 14:3; Acts 1:11. Farmers patiently wait for God’s work in nature to produce a harvest. Believers are to wait patiently for the fulfillment of God’s plan in the spiritual realm.

**5:8** “Firm” – Matt 24:13; 1 Cor 15:58; 16:13; 2 Cor 1:21,24; Eph 6:14; Col 1:23; 4:12; 1 Pet 5:9,10.

“Draws near” – he does not say how near or make any prediction. None of the writers of the New Testament knew the day of Christ’s return. Sometimes it seems that they believed (or at least hoped) that it would take place during their life time. But see John 21:18-23; 2 Tim 4:6. See notes on Rev 1:1-3

**5:9** Grumbling about others is the same as judging them, and this is not our business (4:11,12).

“Lest you be judged” – Matt 7:1,2.

“The judge” – the Lord Jesus (compare 4:12). He is always at the door.

**5:10** He has told them to have patience (v 7), now he points them to great examples of patience in the Old Testament. Heb 11:35-39 briefly sets forth some of the things they suffered.

“Prophets” – note at Gen 20:7.

“In the name of the Lord” – Ex 5:1; 1 Kings 17:1; 2 Kings 7:1; Isa 1:10; Jer 1:9,10; 7:2; Ezek 3:4; 13:2; Hos 4:1; Amos 1:3.

**5:11** “Endure” – 1:2-4. Their sufferings did not destroy their patience and perseverance, but increased them (Rom 5:3).

“Job” – Job 1:13 – 2:10.

blessed who patiently endure. You have heard of the patient endurance of Job, and have seen the end the Lord *brought about*, and that the Lord is very compassionate, and very merciful.

12 But above all things, my brethren, do not swear, not by heaven, or by the earth, or with any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and *your* “no” be no. Otherwise you will fall into judgment.

13 Is anyone among you in trouble? He should pray. Is any happy? He should sing psalms. 14 Is anyone among you sick? He should call for the elders of the church, and they should pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed

“The end” – Job 42:10-17.

“Compassionate. . .merciful” – Ex 34:6,7; Ps 5:7; 25:6; 103:13; 116:5. God will never put more on us than we can bear, and will bring good out of all we have to suffer (Rom 8:28).

**5:12** Matt 5:33-37. We should speak every word as if God Himself were listening to what we say. And indeed He is. So there should be no attempts to deceive anyone.

**5:13,14** The three situations he mentions covers much of the life of believers.

“In trouble” – the Greek means to suffer or endure hardship (2 Tim 2:3; 4:5). This is the common lot of all believers (Acts 14:22).

“Pray” – in answer to prayer God either delivers us from trouble or gives us comfort and strength to endure it patiently. But we should not think James is teaching us to pray only when we are in trouble (compare Eph 6:18; 1 Thess 5:17).

“Happy” – there are times when believers experience relief from their troubles, feel no burdens and are filled with happiness – a good time to sing praises to God (Ps 9:13,14; 18:49; 35:28; 47:6; 51:14,15). All times are good for praising God (1 Thess 5:18), but no doubt there are times when we are better able to do it.

**5:14** Times of sickness are the common lot of mankind, and believers in Christ are not immune from them. James tells us what to do when we are sick. It is one provision God has made for the healing of His people. It is surprising how few believers avail themselves of it. What he states here should be the common practice in all Bible-believing churches.

“In the name of the Lord” – everyone must recognize it is not their power or the power of their words or the oil that heals anyone. The Lord is the healer. It is one of His names – Ex 15:26.

**5:15** It seems clear that God does not always choose to heal His servants immediately when they fall sick (Phil 2:26,27; 1 Tim 5:23; 2 Tim 4:20). In such a case it will not be possible to pray in faith that they will be healed immediately. When anyone has called for the church elders, and God

sins, they will be forgiven him.

16 Confess *your* faults to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. A righteous man's prayer at work is very powerful.

17 Elijah was a man with a nature like we have, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and

six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth its fruit.

19 Brethren, if any of you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns the sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death, and will hide a multitude of sins.

chooses to heal him or her immediately, He will give faith to one or more of the elders and restore the sick person to health.

"If he has committed sins" – he seems to be suggesting that in some cases ("if") sickness comes as a result of the sick person's sin. Compare 1 Cor 11:30 – there weakness and sickness are said to be a result of God's chastisement for certain sins.

"Forgiven" – the Lord who raises him up will forgive him the sins which led to his sickness.

**5:16** "Confess" – he is not speaking of confession to a "priest", but "to one another." This should be a regular part of the fellowship ordinary believers have with each other, especially if any of them falls sick. There should be an openness, and a love and understanding and acceptance which would make this possible. (According to the New Testament all believers are priests – 1 Pet 2:5,9.) We should not think that prayer is a weak and ineffective thing. If we are righteous it has great power.

"Righteous man" – this means a man right with God, who walks in God's ways. If we are to be right with God He must count us righteous (note at Rom 1:17; 3:21-26; 5:1), and we must live righteous lives in obedience to His Word and will (Ps 66:18; Prov 15:29; Isa 1:15; John 9:31). If these two things are true of us, we then have the use of a powerful means for good – prayer. See references at 1 Thess 5:17.

"Very powerful" – or "strongly prevails", or "is able to accomplish much." The Greek noun related to the verb here means "strength", "power", "ability." The prayers of righteous people prevail with God, are a powerful force in the world, and

accomplish great things.

**5:17,18** Here is an example of the power and effect of prayer. See 1 Kings 17:1; 18:41-46. There are many other examples of the power of prayer in the Bible – Gen 20:17; 25:21; Ex 8:30,31; 10:18,19; Num 11:2; Deut 9:20,25-29; 2 Sam 15:31; 17:14,23; 2 Kings 4:32-35; Job 42:10; Ps 18:6-24; Dan 9:4,20-23; Jonah 2:1,10; Luke 9:29; 22:31,32; John 11:41-44; Acts 4:31; 9:40; etc.

"A nature like we have" – Elijah was no superman. He was flesh and blood as we are. He had a sinful nature as we do. He was tempted and tried as we are. His power was not in him but in the God he served. If he could effectively use this wonderful means God has given (prayer), then so can we – if we are righteous as he was righteous.

**5:19,20** "Brethren" – he is addressing a large group of people who are called Christians. We cannot assume that they were all true believers in Christ, or that James thought they were. In most large groups of Christians there are a variety of people – some born again, some not; some living according to the truth, some not. In such a group there is always the possibility that some might forsake the truth altogether (1 Tim 1:6; 6:10,21; 2 Tim 2:18; 2 Pet 2:15). It is very difficult to bring such sinners back to the truth, but James suggests it is possible.

"Death" – spiritual death that leads to eternal separation from God (John 5:24; Eph 2:1). To save anyone from that is surely the greatest thing anyone can do on earth. When it happens all the sins of the rescued sinner are put out of God's sight forever (Ps 103:12; Micah 7:19).