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## “Book of James”

**Weekly Bible Study Schedule**  
**Tuesday, January 15, 7:00-7:55 AM in HHR #5**  
(hot breakfast provided)  
**Capitol Commission is non-partisan and**  
**non-denominational**

### Introduction

If you travel to Branson, Missouri, driving south on highway 65, on a hill, you will see a large lighted sign with the name YAKOV. At a glance, one might assume YAKOV is a theatre name, and they would be right, however; YAKOV is Hebrew for Jacob. English translation name is James. Today, we begin our 2019 session to study the Book of James in the Bible.

Named James in the New Testament are two disciples: James, son of Zebedee, and brother of John; and James son of Alpheus. {Mark 3:16-19 } The writer of the Book of James is the half-brother of Jesus. The Apostle Paul tells the reader about the story in the Books of Acts 12-15 and Galatians 1-2.

Peter led the early church until he moved out of Jerusalem to start new churches; James replaced Peter as the emergent leader of the Messianic Mother Church. The terms Messianic and Mother church mean the community of Christ-following Jews and the Jerusalem church, respectively. The Jerusalem church grew approximately to 25,000 attendees.

Book of James targeted all the Messianic Jews living outside the land of Israel.

In the 20 years of leadership, James shared in the hard times of God’s people. The plight of poverty, famine, and persecution by Jewish leaders in Jerusalem that rejected Jesus, to such a degree James was martyred for his faith. James was known as a pillar of the Jerusalem Church. He was a peaceable man with wisdom and courage.

Unlike Paul’s letters that address problems in local churches, James’ message is highly practical, direct

and challenges how one lives. James offers his abridged wisdom for any generation, any person, and any follower of Jesus.

Notable teachings of Jesus are found in what is known as the sermon on the mount {Matthew 5-7}, James journeyed on the inside lane with Jesus, his half-brother. The Book of Proverbs, especially, chapters 1-9, was read by James as a source of Scripture and to gain wisdom. The teachings of Jesus and the Proverbs influenced James’ teachings as indicated by the nomenclature, imagery, metaphors, and one-liners, in his book. The pinnacle of TORAH (Old Testament Law) is to love God and to love people. The call to true wisdom is to live according to the teaching of Jesus.

Placed in front of the 12 wise teachings presented is the introductory chapter, designed, to sum up, the central ideas, words, and themes encountered in Chapters 2-5.

### 1:4, 7-11 – Life is hard

The Messianic community inside and outside Jerusalem dealt with poverty, famine, and persecution by Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. Rather than leaning into despair, depression, and disillusion with God, James offers another perspective. Life’s trials and hardships are gifts that produce endurance and mold our character. In the midst of suffering, God transforms our ways when we place our trust in Him. A few keys words from chapter 1 are:

- Poverty. Trust in God alone

Various forms of poverty touch humanity; from the dirt roads in North-East Ghana to some U.S. “inner city streets”, to economically depressed rural towns. Have you ever lost your job or someone you knew resulting in dire financial needs? What might it look like if we saw “poverty” as a gift? I know, that might sound ridiculous but what if we considered the idea from James’ vantage point. The gift of poverty causes you to trust in God alone. Our greatest difficulties give way to our biggest gifts when we trust God in spite of the natural circumstances we face.

- Perfection. What does the word perfection mean?

The biblical Hebrew word TAMIM repeats seven times and translates to wholeness and Integrity. In other words, perfection is not the way we typically think of perfection, rather biblical perfection is when your actions are consistent with your words.



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- Broken People. We have feet of clay. The tendency is more inconsistency and compromise in our character than we care to admit. Good news, God is on a mission to restore broken people to make them whole.

### 1:5-6 – Generous portion of wisdom

- Wisdom is the ability to see my hardship through a new perspective
- God is good despite my circumstances
- Ask without a doubt and in faith
- We are frail
- Choose between anxiety and trust

### 1:12-18 – Your circumstances teach you what Jesus taught about God’s character

- God is generous

He is there to meet us in our pain, and He is trustworthy. Jesus has given us new birth to become new kinds of humans who can face their suffering with trust in the Father, just like Jesus did.

- To accuse God is to not understand His character

### 1:19-27 – New life to discover

- Hear God’s Word and do God’s Word
- Jesus freed us to love God and love people
- Love looks like {Matthew 22:34-40}
  - Slow to anger and quick to listen
  - Speaking to others in a kind and loving way
  - Serving the poor
  - Living with wholehearted devotion to God

**Chapters 2-5** presents 12 Teachings that calls God’s people to fully devoted followers of Jesus. Teachings stand alone, no specific order, conclude with one-liners.

### 2:1-13 – Love

- Favoritism - we tend to favor people who can benefit us, and we neglect people who cannot
- Opposite of love – Jesus said in Matthew 5:16-18

### 2:14-26 – What does faith look like in the Book of James?

- Helping the Poor

If someone claims faith in God but neglects, the needy or poor their faith is dead. James teaches one’s words are not enough actions must follow. Obedience is a result of faith. Action demonstrates faith. {Matthew 7:21-27}

### 3:1-12 – Your Words Matter

- Tongue {Luke 6:43-45}
- Same mouth – “curse” people
- Same mouth – “praise” God
- Window into our hearts
- Truth about our character

### 4:11-12 – Judge People

What do you think? {Matthew 12:36-37}

### 4:13-17-5:1-6 – Wealth is not the Issue

- Arrogance of Wealth {Matthew 6:28-34}
- The Danger of Wealth {Matthew 6:19-21}

When one believes wealth will be around forever; they are unwise. The wealthy will one day fade away. In contrast, God’s people are to place their trust in God, not wealth.

### 5:7-11 – Hope for Jesus’ return

- Patience and Endurance in our difficulties
- He will set all things right {Matthew 24:13}

### 5:12 – Our Advantage - Confirmation Bias

- Yes be Yes and No be No {Matthew 5:37}
- Distort Truth

### 5:13-18 – Prayer Changes Situations

- Life of faith-filled prayer {Matthew 5:37}

### Conclusion



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January 15, 2019

Missouri

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James immersed himself in the wisdom of Jesus and of the Proverbs, and James has given us a great gift in this book with his wisdom.

Selective adaptation from Tim Mackey, ReadScripture



