

## A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You

### James

Today on "It's a Good Life," we'll be looking at the book of James. Last week and the last time we were together, we looked at the book of Hebrews, and this is "A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You," the books of the New Testament. We're in study number 20, the book of James.

Let me invite you to go to our website, and on that website, you can actually get transcripts of every program that we've presented on "A Bird's-Eye View for Me and You," the books of the New Testament. We're going through the entire New Testament. It's not my goal to go to an in-depth study in these books. It's to give us a bird's-eye view of what the Lord has for us in each of these books, and at the same time, I would pray and trust that the Lord would lead you and guide you and help you to understand some of the things He has for you personally. I know that we look at each book of the New Testament and we realize there's Scripture that jumps out at us. There's Scriptures that are very familiar, and what I'm trying to do is actually let you see some of the unfamiliar Scriptures, if you would, that we find in the New Testament. Well, the Lord is good to us and He's allowed us to place these transcripts on our website, and you can go there and download those free of charge, or you can write to me, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 34731. The website is [www.LRWM.org](http://www.LRWM.org). You can also download the broadcasts that we're presenting on "It's a Good Life."

Well, the book of James today....and we're going to look at first of all who the author was of this book, and it's thought to be James, the brother of Jesus, and he did not believe in Jesus as the Son of God until He had risen from the dead according to John chapter 7, verses 3-5. You can also read Acts chapter 1, verse 14, I Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 7. James became one of the leaders of the

Jerusalem church according to Acts 15:13 and Galatians 2:9.

The date of this writing....It appears to have been written about A.D. between 45 and 50 and since it does not mention the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15. These dates that I'm giving you are not etched in stone. These are primarily the dates that many Bible scholars would say that this book of the Bible, James and the other books that I've already mentioned, these dates are by historians, those people who have studied the Word of God and they come to these conclusions or these dates that I'm giving you as being an approximate time.

Now the setting of the book....it was written to Jewish Christians who had been scattered from Palestine by persecution or other situations. According to James chapter 1, verse 1, it says, *James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.* Now, you can go ahead and read Acts chapter 8 and verses 1-4 and chapter 12, verses 14-17, of the book of Acts, and it will help you understand that this book was written to Jewish Christians. They were scattered from Palestine by persecution.

And then the key verses that we look at in James, and once again, these are verses that I see as key verses. You may see something else, some other verses there, and that's quite all right, because I would pray that God speaks to your heart and He would draw certain Scripture to your mind and into your understanding as being key verses. But I believe the key verses here are James chapter 1, verses 2-4 first of all. *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations;<sup>2</sup> Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.<sup>3</sup> But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

And then some other verses that I believe are key verses would be James chapter 2, verses 14-17:

<sup>14</sup> *What doeth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?* <sup>15</sup> *If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,* <sup>16</sup> *And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?* <sup>17</sup> *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*

Now, he's not talking about the loss of salvation or being saved by works. He's talking about a result of faith, the result of being saved, of asking Christ into your heart.

Well, the purpose of the book is to show the progress of faith in a Christian's life. In other words, the book of James gives instruction concerning matters that involve faith in the Christian life. It also lets us understand that the purpose is how faith responds to trials. We read this in James chapter 1, verses 2-18. It lets us understand that there's a recognition of the good fruit of testing. James chapter 1, verses 2-4, we've already read that about being complete and also falling into diverse temptations. In verse 4, it says in chapter 1 there, *But let patience have her perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.* It has to do with the perfecting of the saint, of the Christian.

And then James chapter 1, verse 5, says, *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.* Verse 6, *But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.* Verse 7, *For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.*

Another purpose is to look to the promised reward, the crown of life, according to James chapter 1 and verse 12. *Blessed is the man that endureth*

*temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

I believe there's also a reference here that we could to the book of Revelation chapter 2 and verse 10. It says, *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* The crown of life is received for those people who endureth temptation or those people who endure tribulation, those people who do not give up, those people who do not throw in the towel when the going gets tough.

Another purpose of the book is to recognize God as the source of all things good. God can do nothing that is wrong or evil, according to James chapter 1, verses 13-18. He is God. He is the One who is righteous. He is the One who is altogether lovely. He is the One who cannot sin.

And then another purpose of the book lets us know how faith works, according to James chapter 1, verse 19, through chapter 2 and verse 26. First, we see that faith works by faith obeying God's Word. James 1:22 says, *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

And faith practices love, it says in James 1:27. It says there, *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.* The greatest commandment is love according to the Scriptures.

And then we see that love removes discrimination. There's no discrimination when it comes to a saving knowledge of Christ, and we are to show no partiality when someone comes into our churches or approaches us and wants to know about Christ. We are not to show partiality of how a person looks better than another person or whatever, but

we are to treat all people the same. Love removes discrimination.

And then we see that faith produces mercy toward others. In James chapter 2, verses 12-13, it says, <sup>12</sup>*So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.* <sup>13</sup>*For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.*

And then, faith that cannot be seen by people through works shows no indication of life. In other words, it would appear to the outside world that you're saying you're a Christian but you're doing nothing for the Lord. It would appear to that person, "Well, if that person is saved, then I'm as good as they are. I'm going to Heaven if they're going to Heaven." Well, that's not the case. That person who's not working who has been saved, that person who is saved and not doing anything for the Lord, they are exhibiting a bad testimony in front of this world, and if you're one of those people who are not serving God, you need to be serving God today as a testimony to His saving grace, and that person who looks at you and says, "Well, if you're going to Heaven, I'm as good as you. I'm going," then that person is badly mistaken. The only way a person goes to Heaven, of course, is by faith in our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We also see that faith brings us into submission to God, according to James chapter 3 and chapter 4. An act of faith helps control our tongue. Well, that's something that's hard to control isn't it. Our tongue gets us into a lot of trouble, but we see that active faith, that faith that is being used for God, the faith that God has given us that we can work for Him and with Him, it helps to control our tongue. And evidence of working for God and doing His will is that our tongue is controlled by the Lord. True wisdom of God is exhibited or seen and is pure, peaceable, gentle, and easily entreated, or questioned. It holds as much mercy and good results as is possible without showing preference to

any particular individual, and we've talked about that. And true wisdom is displayed without any pretense or false claims, according to James chapter 3.

We also see in James chapter 1 and verse 5, it says, *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.* Ask Him. Ask God for wisdom and He'll give you that wisdom as you study the Word of God. Faith produces victory, according to James chapter 5. Faith, believing God, produces endurance, according to James chapter 5. Faith urges us to pray for each other according to James chapter 5, verses 13-16.

And then we see that those who recognize the seriousness of straying from the truth can help those who have strayed. That person who has strayed from the Lord, that person who is not living for the Lord, that person is saved, and sometimes a person will get out of the will of God. We're not to crush that person, but we are to help that person because they are a child of God.

Now, what is pure religion? According to James 1:27, *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

Now, this, James 1:27, is the only time out of five mentions in the King James Bible the word "religion" is used and meant in a good way. Now this "religion" is a product or a fruit of being saved. You can look in Acts chapter 26 and verse 5, Galatians 1:13, Galatians 1:14, and James 1:26-27 and you'll see the word "religion." But remember, this section of Scripture, James 1:27, is the only time out of the five mentions in the King James Bible where the word "religion" is used and meant in a good way.

Well, there's many other things that we could say about the book of James, but today, I would ask

you. Receive Christ as your Savior. Ask Him to come into your heart today, and He'll save you.

May the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.