

ROUTE 66

Session Number Twenty-Eight

Wednesday, October 1, 2014

JAMES

- 1 James, the writer of this epistle, was the half-brother of Jesus Christ. Some
2 churches deny this, claiming that Mary was a perpetual virgin. The Bible does
3 not substantiate that, however. Matthew 13:55-56 NKJV **Is this not the**
4 **carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James,**
5 **Joses, Simon, and Judas? [56] And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where**
6 **then did this Man get all these things?"**
7
8
- 9
10 • It is interesting to note that James was not a believer during Jesus' earthly life.
11 Luke 7:20-21 John 7:5 **For even His brothers did not believe in Him.**
12
- 13 • He seemed to come to faith in his Half-Brother following the resurrection. 1 Cor.
14 15:7 **After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.** As a result
15 of seeing the risen Lord, James was transformed into a disciple and believer. It
16 was after this transformation in James' life that he joined with the apostles and
17 "the women" assembled in the upper chamber on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem. Acts
18 1:14 **These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with**
19 **the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.**
20
- 21 • James became one of the leaders of the early church. Galatians 2:1-10 **Then**
22 **after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also**
23 **took Titus with me. [2] And I went up by revelation, and communicated to**
24 **them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those**
25 **who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.**
26 **[3] Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be**
27 **circumcised. [4] And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought**
28 **in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ**
29 **Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), [5] to whom we did not yield**
30 **submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with**
31 **you. [6] But from those who seemed to be something--whatever they were, it**
32 **makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man--for**
33 **those who seemed to be something added nothing to me. [7] But on the**
34 **contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been**
35 **committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter [8] (for He**

1 who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also
2 worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), [9] and when **James**, Cephas
3 (Peter), and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been
4 given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we
5 should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. [10] They desired only
6 that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to
7 do.

- 8
- 9 • James was a prayer warrior, as shown in the words of the epistle we are about to
10 study. Because he like to kneel when he prayed, he developed calloused knees,
11 like those of camels. Thus he became known as ‘The Man With Camel’s Knees.’
- 12
- 13 • James was finally martyred by the scribes and pharisees who, according to
14 tradition, threw him off the pinnacle of the Temple. The fall did not kill him so
15 his enemies stoned him and finally finished him off with a club.
- 16

17 The Letter (Epistle)

18

19 The letter from James is the first in a group of books of scripture called GENERAL
20 EPISTLES and they include James, I and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John and Jude. These
21 books are not specifically geared to any particular person or church, but rather to the
22 church as a whole. James deals with the ethics of our faith - or how then should we
23 live?

24 Chapter One

25

26

27 James 1:1 New King James Version (unless otherwise noted)

28 **James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes**
29 **which are scattered abroad: Greetings.**

30

31 Don’t you find it strange that James does not open his letter by writing, “James, the half
32 brother of Jesus Christ”? How true that Jews have been “scattered” all over this earth
33 again and again. The word “diaspora” means “dispersion.”

34

35 James 1:2-11

36 **My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, [3] knowing that the**
37 **testing of your faith produces patience. [4] But let patience have its perfect work,**
38 **that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. [5] If any of you lacks**
39 **wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it**
40 **will be given to him. [6] But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts**

1 is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. [7] For let not that man
2 suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; [8] he is a double-minded man,
3 unstable in all his ways.

4 [9] Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, [10] but the rich in his
5 humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. [11] For no sooner
6 has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and
7 its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his
8 pursuits.

9
10 Verses 2 and 3 remind us of our recent study of Joseph. He was willing to allow God to
11 mold him, even though it took some years to do so. "Count it all joy when you are tested
12 (verse 2)." Why? Because the testing of our faith produces spiritual stamina in us.

13
14 While wisdom seems to be a missing ingredient in the lives of many believers today,
15 James wrote that we could ask God for it and he would bestow it liberally.

16
17 Verses 9 - 11 tells us to always be subject to the will of God for our lives - even though
18 we may disagree with His divine call. Our success in life will be clearly revealed at the
19 Judgment Seat of Christ.

20
21 James 1:12-20

22 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he
23 will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.
24 [13] Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be
25 tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. [14] But each one is tempted
26 when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. [15] Then, when desire has
27 conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. [16]
28 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. [17] Every good gift and every perfect gift
29 is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no
30 variation or shadow of turning. [18] Of His own will He brought us forth by the
31 word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

32 [19] So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak,
33 slow to wrath; [20] for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

34
35 James will impart to us some of the strongest biblical teachings on temptation in all
36 scripture. Everyone is tempted. How do we deal with it? James wrote that we would
37 receive a CROWN OF LIFE for successfully battling salvation.

38
39 As a matter of fact, the Bible promises 5 crowns to the believer:

- 40 1. This crown of life – James 1:12

1 2. An incorruptible crown for successfully running this race of life - 1 Cor. 9:24
2 **Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize?**
3 **Run in such a way that you may obtain it.**
4

5 3. A crown of rejoicing - 1 Thes. 2:19 (Seeing folks we have led to the Lord at the
6 final judgment around God's great throne) **For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of**
7 **rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?**
8

9 4. A crown of righteousness - Paul wrote: 2 Tim. 4:6-8 (KJV) **For I am now**
10 **ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. [7] I have fought a**
11 **good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: [8] Henceforth there is**
12 **laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall**
13 **give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his**
14 **appearing.**
15

16 5. The crown of glory - 1 Peter 5:2-4 Given to those who are under-shepherds:
17 **Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not**
18 **because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy**
19 **for money, but eager to serve; [3] not lording it over those entrusted to you, but**
20 **being examples to the flock. [4] And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will**
21 **receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.**
22

23 James now thrusts in the sword of conscience to those who "hear" the word but don't
24 "do" it. James 1:21-27 **Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so**
25 **prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.**

26 [22] **Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.**
27 [23] **Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who**
28 **looks at his face in a mirror [24] and, after looking at himself, goes away and**
29 **immediately forgets what he looks like. [25] But the man who looks intently into the**
30 **perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has**
31 **heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does.**

32 [26] **If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his**
33 **tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. [27] Religion that God our**
34 **Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in**
35 **their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.**
36

37 Chapter Two

38
39 I believe the key word to James' writing is "practicality." His teachings were sound and
40 so usable in everyday life. Our faith in Christ must relate to every-day living.

1 The first verses of chapter 2 deal with “snobbery in the church.”

2 James 2:2-4

3 **For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine**
4 **apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, [3] and you pay**
5 **attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good**
6 **place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool,"**
7 **[4] have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil**
8 **thoughts?**

9
10 We must always watch that we do not allow the church to become a country club. This is
11 not to say that we should not do the best we can in our buildings for the Lord. Our
12 buildings should be well-kept. James reminds us of one of Jesus’ principle teachings:
13 Matthew 19:19 **'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'**

14 Faith Without Works

15
16 Our missionary convention theme for this year is ‘DO SOMETHING!’ Paul taught us in
17 Romans and Galatians that works cannot save us. But now we have James tell us:
18 James 2:17 **Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.** Jesus
19 Himself taught us: Matthew 5:16 **Let your light so shine before men, that they may**
20 **see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.** I often think of Paul’s
21 chilling reminder in 2 Cor. 5:10: **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of**
22 **Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he**
23 **has done, whether good or bad.**

24
25
26 My good friend Gary Sanford Paxton (who prior to his conversion gave the world such
27 songs as “Alley Oop” and “Monster Mash,” wrote a song with this lyric:

28 *Profession without performance is pretense;*
29 *And hearing without the doing is zero;*
30 *Not using the powers we know makes no sense;*
31 *For profession without performance is pretense.*

32
33
34 I have often preached in churches across the country to pray for the lost and even have
35 missions banners on their walls....but do nothing to make it happen. No outreach to their
36 community, no missionaries in their services, no missions convention, no nothing. And
37 they wonder why nothing ever happens. I once preached in a small church in Arkansas
38 where this motto was displayed on the church wall: ***AIN'T HARDLY BEEN NOBODY***
39 ***WHAT'S EVER BEEN SAVED BUT WHAT WAS WENT AFTER!*** Amen!

1 James used two biblical illustrations: Abraham was a classic example of faith but he was
2 willing to DO SOMETHING about his faith. And it was one thing for Rahab to say she
3 had faith in the God of Joshua, but it was quite another for her to hide the spies and assist
4 them in their escape. What a great combination: FAITH AND WORKS.
5

6 Chapter Three

7
8 This is the chapter in which James warns about “the untamable tongue.” A believer
9 who might never consider committing adultery or blasphemy might easily fall in the area
10 of looseness of the tongue.
11

12 **James 3:1-12 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we**
13 **shall receive a stricter judgment. [2] For we all stumble in many things. If anyone**
14 **does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. [3]**
15 **Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their**
16 **whole body. [4] Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by**
17 **fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. [5]**
18 **Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest**
19 **a little fire kindles! [6] And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so**
20 **set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of**
21 **nature; and it is set on fire by hell. [7] For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile**
22 **and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. [8] But no man**
23 **can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. [9] With it we bless**
24 **our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the**
25 **similitude of God. [10] Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My**
26 **brethren, these things ought not to be so. [11] Does a spring send forth fresh water**
27 **and bitter from the same opening? [12] Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a**
28 **grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.**
29

30 Our Lord warned about this as well: Matthew 12:36-37 **But I say to you that for**
31 **every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.**
32 **[37] For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be**
33 **condemned.”**
34

35 The unbridled use of the tongue is a sin. It is the most destructive force in the world of
36 the spirit. Read again verses 5 and 6. A person might say, “Well, I said it but I didn’t
37 mean it.” Of course, he or she meant it! The Bible declares that “out of the abundance
38 of the heart, the mouth speaks!” A person’s words are the clearest barometer of that
39 person’s inner spirit.
40

1 James 3:13-18 **Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good**
2 **conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. [14] But if you have**
3 **bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.**
4 **[15] This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. [16]**
5 **For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. [17]**
6 **But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to**
7 **yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. [18]**
8 **Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.**
9

10 A person's words (teaching) must be backed by good conduct and works that show the
11 highest possible wisdom and discretion. I once had a board member (in another city) who
12 was a great student of the Word and a solid teacher in Sunday School, but who cut my
13 ministry - and that of the church - to pieces during the week. He had to be dealt with
14 and it was not a pretty picture. I often wondered, how could that man know so much
15 about scriptures and yet use them so seldom in his daily life?
16

17 Chapter Four

18
19 What a powerful chapter this is! James 4:1-10 **Where do wars and fights come from**
20 **among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your**
21 **members? [2] You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain.**
22 **You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. [3] You ask and do**
23 **not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. [4]**
24 **Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is**
25 **enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes**
26 **himself an enemy of God. [5] Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The**
27 **Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? [6] But He gives more grace. Therefore**
28 **He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." [7] Therefore**
29 **submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. [8] Draw near to God and**
30 **He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts,**
31 **you double-minded. [9] Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned**
32 **to mourning and your joy to gloom. [10] Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord,**
33 **and He will lift you up.**
34

35 Many professing Christians today want "the best of both worlds." We want the blessings
36 of Heaven and the pleasures of Hellish living. The Bible still teaches: 2 Cor. 6:17
37 **Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not**
38 **touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."** This world system is NEVER going to
39 be friends with Jesus. As Joshua challenged so long ago, "Choose this day who you will
40 serve!"

1 James 4:11-12 **Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a**
2 **brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you**
3 **judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. [12] There is one Lawgiver,**
4 **who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?**

5
6 The “royal law” of God is that we love each other even as we love ourselves. It only
7 stands to reason that when a person is slandering (speaking evil) of another person, he
8 cannot possibly love that person as he loves himself. Therefore, he is breaking one of
9 God’s greatest laws. In effect he says, “I can do what I choose; so I will speak evil of
10 this person if I want to.”

11
12 There is another great danger in slander: it makes the slanderer the judge. Only God has
13 that right.

14
15 James 4:13-17 **Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such**
16 **and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; [14] whereas**
17 **you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a**
18 **vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. [15] Instead you ought**
19 **to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." [16] But now you boast**
20 **in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. [17] Therefore, to him who knows to do**
21 **good and does not do it, to him it is sin.**

22
23 What is your life? It is shortly-lived. In 1966 I sang with a group of three guys called
24 “The ViCounts.” Jack Fields, the tenor – Roger Kling, the baritone and pianist - and
25 myself, the lead singer and M.C. We traveled across this country - on one trip driving
26 our bus (Jack and I drove it) from Harrisburg, Pa., our home to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and
27 then across Canada clear to Vancouver, B.C., and then back across the United States - six
28 weeks in all. Jack is gone now. So is Roger. I’m the remaining ViCount. How did
29 that happen? Wasn’t it just a few months ago that we traversed North America? Life
30 is shortly lived.

31
32 Years ago, there used to be a habit among Christians of putting the letters “DV” by states
33 they wrote. Such as, “I plan to be home for Christmas, DV.” D.V. simply abbreviated
34 the Latin words “Deo Valente,” which meant, “God willing.” It was a good practice. If
35 God wills, we will do such and such.

36 37 Chapter Five

38
39 James 5:1-6 **Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming**
40 **upon you! [2] Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. [3]**

1 **Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you**
2 **and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. [4]**
3 **Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by**
4 **fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of**
5 **Sabaoth. [5] You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened**
6 **your hearts as in a day of slaughter. [6] You have condemned, you have murdered**
7 **the just; he does not resist you.**

8
9 James here makes a strong case against 2 elements in the realm of riches:

- 10 • the person who makes his wealth illegally and immorally;
11 • the person who indulges in materialism to the point of forgetting his requirements
12 to God.

13
14 In her highly-controversial book *Atlas Shrugged*, the late Ayn Rand made the point that
15 no person is moral who makes his or her wealth at the expense of another's rights to do
16 the same. She called such people "moochers and looters." James makes a similar case
17 here, condemning those who gain by injustice. There is nothing wrong or sinful about
18 money. But to gain it at the expense of another's rights is corrupt and sinful.

19
20 James' last passage here deals with patience. "Stick-to-it-ive-ness: as we used to call it
21 in the Ozark hills. James 5:11 **As you know, we consider blessed those who have**
22 **persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord**
23 **finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.**

24
25 We live in a day of "instant everything" – including coffee. (Horrible stuff). There is
26 something definitely fishy about a society that has produced "instant potatoes." In the
27 spirit world, great victories are accomplished by staying with the guns. David, for
28 example, was anointed king YEARS before he ever sat on the throne of Israel. Or how
29 about Joseph, whom we studied the last two Sundays? There were 13 years between the
30 dreams and the reality of them.

31
32 As James closes his little book, he reminds us to pray for the sick:

33
34 James 5:13-18 **Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let**
35 **him sing songs of praise. [14] Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the**
36 **church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. [15] And**
37 **the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him**
38 **up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. [16] Therefore confess your sins to each**
39 **other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous**
40 **man is powerful and effective.**

1 **[17] Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and**
2 **it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. [18] Again he prayed, and the**
3 **heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.**

4
5 I have to smile sometimes when I see or hear preachers in the media selling “anointing
6 oil.” There is nothing special about the oil. It’s the obedience in praying a prayer of
7 faith over those with needs that makes the difference. I believe in divine healing with all
8 my heart. I don’t have all the answers (very few, in fact) concerning why some are
9 healed and some are not. But we still keep praying and we continue to see God’s
10 marvelous hand at work.

11
12 James concluded his delightful epistle by encouraging believers to learn the ministry of
13 restoration. James 5:19-20 **My brothers, if one of you should wander from the**
14 **truth and someone should bring him back, [20] remember this: Whoever turns a**
15 **sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a**
16 **multitude of sins.**

17
18 Paul’s letter to the Galatians comes right to the point on this issue: Galatians 6:1

19 **Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him**
20 **gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.**

21
22 If we could reach ever fallen believer, everyone who has drifted away from the Lord for
23 one reason or another, all the churches in this city would not be sufficient to hold the
24 crowds. Let us never be a barrier to those who have stumbled. Let us reach out in love
25 and compassion and bring them back to the fold, just as the Good Shepherd did with the
26 lost lamb.

27
28 Next week: I and II Peter