

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Count It All Joy
James 1:1-4

Last time...persecution of the Church by the Government began

The Apostle James was martyred by Herod Agrippa I

The Apostle Peter was imprisoned by Herod, freed by the Lord, and went into hiding

And an exhortation to Finish well our course

This time...the pastor of the Church in Jerusalem is inspired by the Holy Spirit to write a no nonsense letter to the entire Church

We are in James 1

The historical context when this letter was written in about 45 AD

Hard times are coming! Get ready!

1. Persecution by the Jews

Acts 5:17-18

Acts 7

Acts 8:1

Acts 9:1-2

Acts 9:28-31

2. Persecution by the Romans (Gov't)

Acts 12:1-3a

3. Famine

Acts 11:27-30

4. Simmering division regarding what to do with the Gentile believers...

Grace vs Law

Acts 11:1-3

5. Scattered Jews are preaching the Gospel to Jews only

Acts 8:4

Acts 11:19

Inspired by the Holy Spirit

2 Tim 3:16-17 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works

James writes a letter to the Church in these hard times

This letter is as timely today as it was then

v1 James:

From: Jacob, Anglicized as “James” by the KJV translators

- the brother of Jesus
 - the son of Joseph and Mary
 - not believe in Jesus until after His resurrection and appearance to him (1 Cor 15:7)
 - the pastor of the Church in Jerusalem
 - “self”-described as
 - a servant of God
 - a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ
- a. God and the Lord Jesus Christ are equated
- b. Once a scoffer of his older half-brother, he now declares himself to be a “slave” of the God of his fathers and the Jewish Messiah

From the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, (the early Church fathers, the disciples of the Apostles) in the writings of Clement (disciple of Peter, John, and Paul):

Peter, James, and John (Jesus’ Inner Circle) did not contend for glory by competing to be the pastor of the Church
Instead, they supported James as the pastor of the Church

Note: It seems Mark 9:33-35 and John 13:3-5, 13-17
“stuck”

After Acts 5, in which

- Peter and John were thrown into prison
- The Lord freed them from prison
- Peter and John taught in the Temple and were then escorted before the Sanhedrin
- Peter responded Acts 5:29-32
- “cooler head” Gamaliel counseled Acts 5:34-39

Peter and John went to James to discuss what had happened and to pray

James went to the Temple the following day with Peter and John
There, Gamaliel spoke to James:

Tell us more

I and all gathered here are willing to learn what God has revealed to you.

Nothing is more precious than the truth

I will protect you from those who are prejudiced against you.

We will now listen eagerly and in silence

Spirit-filled, James then spoke from the Scriptures, the Law and the prophets, about all that was fulfilled in and by Jesus,

- the very Christ
- the only Begotten of the Father
- the Self-originated God the Savior

James also spoke of the 2 Comings of the Messiah

1st: in humiliation (accomplished)

2nd: in glory to set up His kingdom (future)

Also from the ancient Church fathers:

From Jericho, Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-9) wrote to James about Simon Magnus subverting the “Matt 16:16” faith of the brethren in Caesarea

James promptly sent Peter to refute this heretic

to the twelve tribes scattered abroad:

To: the 12 tribes scattered broad

The Jewish believers scattered from Jerusalem by persecution

The Church (which is Jewish at this time) outside of Jerusalem

This is the 1st Church-wide letter inspired by the Holy Spirit,
a letter of exhortation to guard their hearts and minds to “stay the course”
with Jesus Christ in the midst of the storm gathered about them

greeting:

Hello! I pray all is well with you, that you are healthy and happy

v2-3 count it all joy...temptations...patience:

James “jumps right into” the matter at hand

Unlike Paul’s epistles, which we will study in their chronological order as well,
where the salutation usually went on for 4 to 6 verses, the introduction by
James is one crisp verse

No wasted words, no small talk

Just direct and to the point

Much is said with few words

My brethren...Matt 12:46-50

James has a different view on “family” now that the risen Lord,
his “big brother”, rose from the dead and appeared to him

count it all joy...consider and think calmly that it is delightful

when ye fall into...when (not if) all ya’ll (all of us) are surrounded by

divers temptations...various adversities and trials/tribulations

oh, you know, adversities like

1. Persecution from the Jews
2. Persecution from the Romans (Gov't)
3. Famine
4. Simmering division over what to do about Gentile believers

knowing...having learned by experience i.e. a reminder

(this is not their 1st rodeo in the last 15 years)

that the trying of your faith...testing of our

- faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
- trusting in, leaning on the Lord regardless of the circumstances
- enduring the process of having our faith refined, all the impurities in our hearts scraped away until the Refiner sees His face
- willingness to experiencing a deeper fellowship with the Lord, which comes only in adversity (the Psalms of David come “to life”)

David said, ‘though I walk *through* the valley of the shadow of death.’
(Ps 23).

Jesus told His disciples, ‘Let’s get in the boat and go over *to* the other side.’ (Mark 4:35-41).

When the storm rose, the disciples were focused on the adversity
and not on the One Who was in the boat with them.

Jesus is in our boat, and He is enough.

Why must our faith be tried/tested/proven?

The testing of our faith...whereby it is proven to be real, sincere, real...
bears fruit of the Spirit...

- love – the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts
- joy – The Lord is with us
- peace – not as the world gives but as Jesus gives
- longsuffering – “fortitude, patience” rooted God’s love
- gentleness – in hard, contentious, demanding times
- goodness – blessing those who curse us
- faith – doers of the Word of God
- meekness – transcending strength
- temperance – control of Self

bears not the fruit of the flesh of murmuring, whining, complaining

We must know that the testing is not to destroy, but to strengthen and
improve...to prove value

e.g. expensive equipment is not tested to destroy it but to prove its
performance and value.

worketh...accomplishes

patience...cheerful endurance and continuance (John 8:31-32) in even the most difficult times

Patience: cheerfully waiting for God to do what He said He would

principles of Patience

- is not the same as tolerance (of sin, 2 Thes 3:5, 1 Cor 5)
- is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23)

power of Patience

- to teach us to trust the Father (Heb 6:11-12)
- God is in absolute control...believe it!

perspective of Patience

- Who am I following? (2 Tim 3:10-11)
- God is with you (Rom 8:31); wait while He works
- is the choice made, not the emotion felt (Rom 5:3-5)

and “Be calm and cheerful when you are in tribulation, affliction, persecution, distress. Cheerfully wait for God to move.”

Patience is a key objective of the Lord’s work in our lives

Adversities and trials today are used by the Lord to accomplish this key objective.

Phil 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ

volatile,
place our
work in our

The Holy Spirit does not say “Be happy”...for happiness is a fleeting emotion dependent upon circumstances
Instead, we are exhorted to by joyful...a transcending choice to confidence in the Father in heaven Who is faithfully at circumstances as only He can

This is real life!

These are not empty or academic words – James and the church are living these words!

These words are, therefore, very credible and reviving/restoring
Ps 119:149, 154, 156, 159

Adversity, a trial, is NOT an indication of God’s displeasure with us...

it is an opportunity to choose to depend on Him rather than ourselves...
it is a test of our faith in God and in the Lord Jesus Christ...
(Which is bigger: the adversity/trial or our God?)
it is an opportunity to “grow up”, become more spiritually mature

In 45 AD, these are times of testing and purification of the Church

As are these times in 2020 – the Church is being tested and purified

- COVID-19
 - economic shut down
 - personal isolation and separation
 - confusion and contradictions and controversies
 - fear
- racial tension
- organized mayhem and lawlessness
- cities burning
- great political divide
- “the beginnings of sorrows” and the Days of Lot and Noah
- Israel happenings this week
 - Neighbors
 - Peace with UAE
 - Peace next with Sudan?
 - Saudi Arabia allow Israel to enter its airspace
 - Iran: Treason!
 - Elsewhere
 - Kosovo and Serbia
 - Normalize relations (acknowledge right to exist)
 - Kosovo (90% Muslim) recognize Israel
 - Serbia move its embassy to Jerusalem
 - Russia: Foul!
 - Iran and Russia: Ezk 38-39...which ends how?!

In our mutual trial as in our individual trials, it is time to lean on Jesus
rather than withdraw and isolate ourselves, our natural tendency.
We are our brother’s keeper when we encourage each other in our trials to
lean on Jesus, to “stay the course”

Our test: Will we react and think according to our emotions...
or will we choose to be calm and cheerful and put our confidence in the
Father?

I choose to trust that the Lord will do what He said He would do...

1 Thes 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of
God in Christ Jesus concerning you

1 Thes 5:23-24 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly;
and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body
be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord

Jesus Christ. Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who
also will do *it*
by faith...Heb 11:1

Rom 8:28-29

Hard times, that yield a much more intense dependence upon the Lord,
are allowed by God for just that purpose
In God's ways of conforming us into the image of Jesus Christ, adversities
are blessings, not curses
For a fruitful walk with the Lord Jesus Christ, we need to keep God's
perspective in all circumstances
For John 3:30 in our lives, adversity, trials and tribulations, are necessary
and profitable

v4 But let patience have her perfect work:

We are to follow Jesus on this narrow path that leads to eternal life...

- it is not an easy path
- there are no short cuts or detours...the desired result comes only at the end
- we must learn to not meddle with/subvert/short circuit the work of God by taking matters into our own hands
i.e. walk in the flesh vs the Spirit

And what is God's desired end?

That we would mature, grow up in the faith, conformed into the image of
His dear Son

With the adversity/trial He allowed or sent, God is working to strengthen
and prove His children so we are complete and whole,
lacking nothing of the best things He wants to give us

Therefore

Do not resist the work of God in our life, allow Him to work
Do not ambush or hinder His good and perfect work, let Him complete
the good work He has started

2 Peter 1:5-11

Ps 37:1-11

2 Thes 1:4-5

James 1:12

Application/Lessons

Count it all joy...consider and think calmly that it is delightful

When we are surrounded by adversities that prove our value

As we cheerfully wait for God to do what He promised to do

As we press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus

As we keep God's eternal perspective

As we reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with
the glory which shall be revealed in us

As we Matt 16:24

As we learn sanctification...laying down your will for the Father's will

As we are of good cheer in this world of tribulation, knowing that Jesus has overcome
the world

As we shine as lights in the midst of this crooked and perverse nation

Because

- God is working
- People are watching
- Souls may be saved by our faithful witness
- We want to finish well our course
- Luke 21:28, 36