

JAMES 1; December 9; Trials, Temptation & Pure Religion

ANALYSIS:

1. Where is wisdom available and how is given?

2. What blessing is promised to the man who endures temptation?

3. Can you trace the downward steps of sin beginning with temptation?

4. After the command, "Be ye doers ... not hearers only," how are these two described?

5. What is pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father?

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

James writes to comfort Jews who trusted Christ. They were targets of intense persecution and ostracism from their unbelieving countrymen. He exhorts them to rejoice because testing gives knowledge, works patience and leads finally to full maturity of Christian character. In times of life's reverses, prayer is essential; petition God for wisdom to speak, live and even die to the glory of God.

According to Josephus, the Jewish historian, James, the oldest half brother of Jesus (Mt 13:55), died a martyr for Jesus. Ananus, the high priest, about A.D. 62 or A.D. 66 assembled the Sanhedrin, and commanded James, "the brother of Jesus who is called Christ," to proclaim from one of the galleries of the temple that Jesus was not the Messiah. But, instead, James cried out that Jesus was the Son of God and Judge of the world. Then his enraged enemies hurled him to the ground, and stoned him till a charitable fuller ended his sufferings with a club, while he was on his knees praying, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." [Halley's Bible Handbook, page 657]

This book of James on practical religion begins and ends with prayer petitions (1:5; 5:14-18). May we learn to pray over all aspects of our lives, for we have the promise that God gives wisdom most liberally!

HELP:

1. Ask God for wisdom; He gives liberally and upbraideth not (v 5).
2. The Lord promises him a crown of life (v 12).
3. Temptation appears vs a thought, our personal lust (desire) then draws us and is enticed, lust conceives (sin in thought), lust bringeth forth (sin in deed), sin brings death (vs 14-15).
4. Hearers only: one hears the word of God, but does nothing -- like a person seeing himself in a mirror and doing nothing. Doers: one hears the word of God and continues in the word by doing what is commanded (vs 22-25).
5. To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world (v 27).